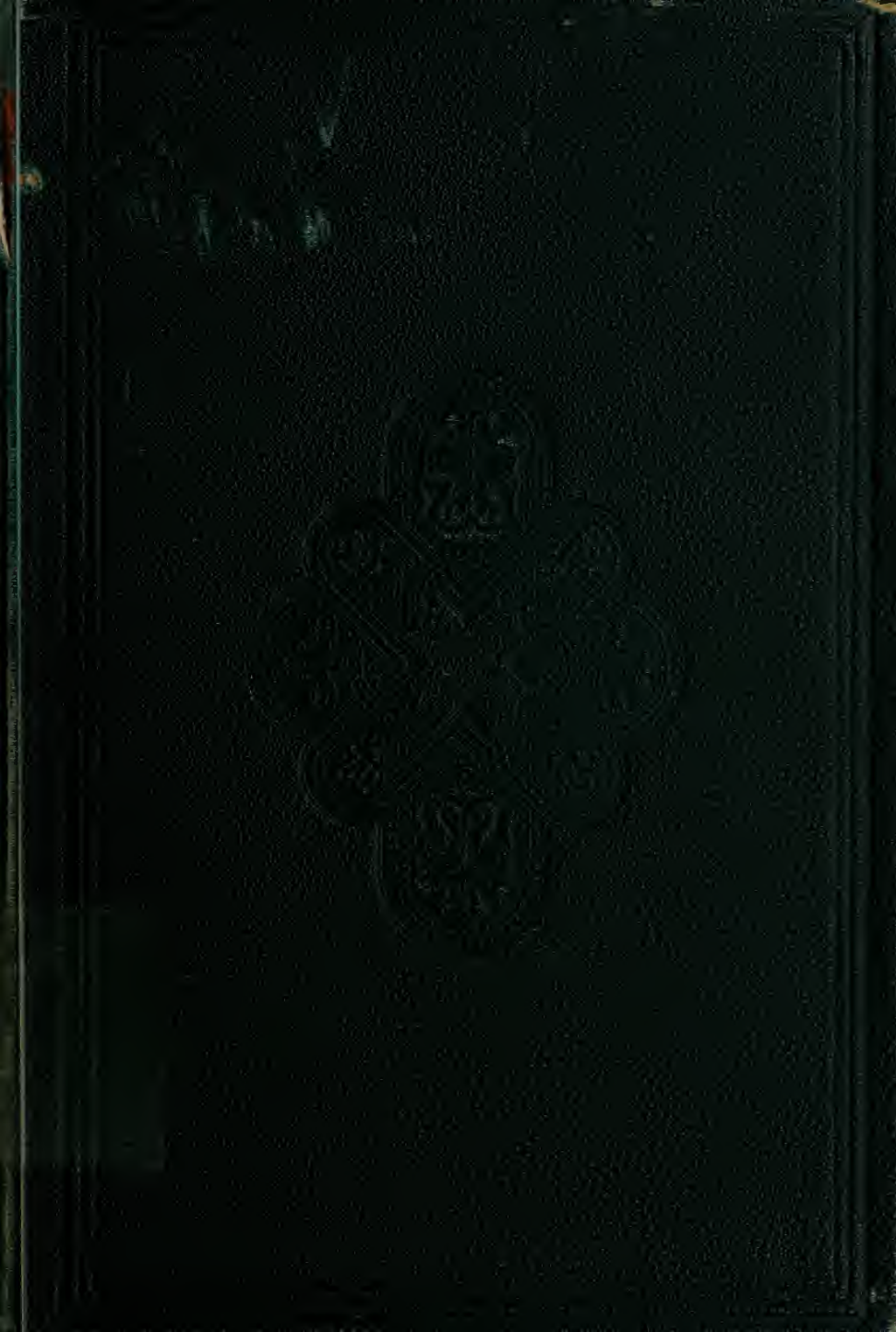

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ITS ORIGIN, ITS HISTORY, ITS PRESENT POSITION.

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THE CHURCH:

ITS ORIGIN, ITS HISTORY, ITS PRESENT POSITION.

BY

DRS. LUTHARDT, KAHNIS, AND BRÜCKNER.

PROFESSORS OF THEOLOGY, LEIPSIC.

Translated from the German

BY

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EDINBURGH:

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

MDCCCLXVII.

These Lectures were delivered at Leipsic during the winter of 1865.

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LECTURE I.

THE HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION.

In saluting you, my esteemed hearers, both in my own name and in those of the colleagues who are my fellow-labourers in our present undertaking, I venture to assume that in discoursing to you on religious subjects during the present, as I did during the preceding winter, I am but responding to your desires, and to accept your presence on this occasion as a pledge that this assumption is a just one ; as also that you favourably regard the fact that this series of lectures is to be the result of our joint efforts. The subject which each will bring before you will be an independent one, and as such will be independently treated ; yet we trust that one common key-note will be audible throughout our varying tones, and that our several tasks will be found to form a connected whole. In the first three lectures, I shall endeavour to bring before you the progress of revelation, from those earliest beginnings which first deposited the germ of the future in the soil of humanity, to the close which its historical development found in the Christian church, when a locality upon earth was obtained for the new blessing

bestowed upon mankind, whence it was progressively to penetrate and pervade the outer and inner life of all nations. The second group of lectures will conduct you through the various ages of the Church, and show you how Christianity has been at all times the life of the world, and under every change of outward appearance one and the same salvation for mankind.

The present state of the Church, as the result of this history—a present abounding in tasks and questions, in oppositions and difficulties, yet at the same time in powers and hopes—will furnish material for the third.

The subject of our lecture to-day is *the History of the Old Testament Revelation.* Perhaps I am somewhat bold when I ask you to follow me into the province of Old Testament history. For, unacquainted with it as we for the most part are, it does not very often awaken any very lively interest, and yet it deserves it in the very highest degree ; and that not merely because as the most peculiar province of ancient history it is worthy beyond all others of historical esteem. A higher interest than an historical one attaches to it. Old Testament history commands in the highest degree our religious interests. For here are to be found the sources of our faith, the roots of Christianity, the beginnings of the present. Attacks upon religion are for the most part directed against the Old Testament, and it is only by attaining such a knowledge of its history as will enable us to understand the connection of the whole, and to mark the progress by which it has been developed, that we shall

be able to refute objections which may be raised against detached portions.

We are living in an age of much mental agitation on the subject of religion. Religious questions occupy the most prominent place in the public discussions of the day. We are in a religious crisis. It is not religion which is passing through a crisis, but it is ourselves, and everything depends upon how we endure it. Its result will be decisive of our future. Now the question which is the soul of all this mental agitation is the *question of Revelation.* Externally viewed, the questions which agitate our age are of very various kinds, and may be enumerated as those of the Church and its constitution, of Confessions of faith and their validity, of the person of Jesus Christ and its mysterious nature. But the question of revelation lies at the root of all these. It is the soul of all the others. Christianity stands or falls with it; for Christianity is what it is, only if it is the revealed religion. If it is not a revelation, but a natural phase of man's intellectual development, it ceases to be a spiritual power for *universal man.* For each single product of the human intellect is a phenomenon characterised by partiality, and can therefore be no universal power, destined to sway, and justified in exercising dominion over the whole race of man. Then too must Christianity prepare, when its day is past, to vacate the stage of history. For each separate phase of intellectual development is but transitory and disappears from history. In fact we are already told that Christianity is disappear-

ing from history. But, God be praised, facts testify abundantly that its sources are far from being dried up.

There is no question which touches us so nearly as that of which I am speaking. It is, in the strictest sense, the personal concern of each of us. Everything depends upon attaining certainty concerning revelation. There are many ways by which this may be effected. One is the psychological. He who understands himself must acknowledge that revelation is in accordance with the necessities of our spiritual life, that it is the solution of the enigmas which we carry within us, the answer to the inquiries of our heart, of our conscience, of our reason. Of this I spoke to you in my former course. Another way is the historical. This consists in tracing the hidden progress from one degree of revelation to another, and the close connection existing between the various degrees. And this is the consideration which is now to occupy us.

The history of Revelation extends through centuries and millennaries. The several products of the Spirit who is its author, belong to the most widely differing outward circumstances. But a closer observation will discover an unbroken connection between its first beginnings and its last and loveliest blossoms which were disclosed to us in Christianity, and a gradual progress from the former to the latter. And this is a fact pointing to that higher hand which has ruled therein.

It was Lessing who expressed the thought that revelation was the education of mankind. And certainly the progress of revelation is the progress of our

race. But it is not enough to say that revelation is the education of mankind; we must also say that the education of mankind is revelation. For the end of this education is the salvation of man, and salvation can be only a gift and act of God, *i.e.* revelation.

Two ways lead to this end. They meet when they reach it, but before they were separate. It was necessary that mankind should be prepared for salvation, and salvation for mankind. The former took place in the heathen nations, the latter in Israel. The history of *heathen nations* is that of the preparation of mankind for salvation. The history of missions shows us a fact which has often repeated itself, and which points to some law as its cause. If a people is to become Christian, it must be ripe for such an event. Now it is an essential part of such ripeness that it should have exhausted the means it possesses in its own resources. It is when it has reached the utmost limits of its own capability, that it is more susceptible of receiving something new, than when it believes itself to possess an inexhaustible supply of power for the future. This law of each individual nation has been the universal law in the education of the human race in general. It must of necessity attain to a ripeness for Christianity. It was for this ripeness that God was educating the præ-Christian world when he led them by the way of most luxuriant self-development to the utmost bounds of their capability, and at the same time to a consciousness of their limitation. In *Israel*, however, God was

meanwhile preparing salvation itself, and was bringing it by the way of historical development to that maturity which made it capable of becoming a universal possession for mankind. The history of revelation is accomplished in Israel, the history of other nations is the revelationless history of mankind left to itself. These are the two ways by which God led our race to its destined goal. At that goal the two ways meet. And that goal is Jesus Christ, for He is the world's salvation. In Him revelation attains its destined and world embracing maturity. Before Him it was restricted within narrow bounds, there to ripen for its coming universality. And this process is founded upon a universal law. Every new principle which is destined to become a power of life, is developed in restriction, and it is not till the fulness of its time is come, that it oversteps this restriction and discloses the whole compass of its influence. Nationality was the restriction of revelation. For in the contrasts exhibited by the various nations, the *unity* of the race was obliterated. They lost their spiritual bond of union, and therefore, even externally, fell under the law of inflexible narrowness and mutual alienation. Our race's deepest bond of union is God. Upon Him depends all true humanity. It was when Christianity restored its one God to the world, that it also bestowed upon it humanity. The præ-Christian period is that of national narrowness and mutual alienation. Hence, revelation and its religion were also restricted within

the boundaries of a single nation, and there passed through their historical development.

Its beginnings, indeed, lie still farther back, reaching to the origin of the race. And the historical knowledge of Israel is connected with this origin.

The historical knowledge of the other nations reaches no farther back than the beginnings of their own nationalities. But there were men, and there was a human race before there were nations. Yet the knowledge thereof was preserved only in Israel. The track of revelation also lies through these primitive times. Its essential matter is the remembrance of an early and departed time of happy intercourse with God, of which man is now, by his own fault, deprived, yet for which he is nevertheless adapted; and the hope of a future which shall bring victory over all those powers of evil, now so sore a burden upon human existence. Amidst the most widely differing nations, from the inhabitants of Eastern Asia, to the Indians of North America, we find legends and predictions reaching back to primitive times, and pointing forwards to a distant future. These exhibit, for the most part, the wildest revels of the imaginations. But an original germ, underlying these fantastic images, is plainly perceptible, and various as may be the forms they bear, they all point to one common root. It is very remarkable how frequently the traditions and the hopes of nations, having no kind of external intercourse with each other, coincide. These common traditions, and common hopes, reveal

the common origin of the nations. But when they left their primitive home, the knowledge of it was also lost. In the case of Israel alone, was this preserved. It is in the eleven first chapters of the first book of Moses, that we find the foundation of all the manifold legends into which the remembrance maintained by the human race of its origin has been broken up. From these primitive narratives of Holy Scripture, we see that God did not leave himself, without witness to mankind. Even those early races were not without revelation, not without communion with God. A sign that revelation and salvation were not to be the matters of a single nation, but of the entire human race. The beginning is a prophecy in facts of the future. If revelation was afterwards confined to a single nation, this was but an interim, which was to come to an end. The history of salvation was restricted within the limits of a nation, only that at the appointed time it might burst through those limits as the salvation of the whole race.

It was a consequence of the dispersion of mankind, and its separation into nations, that religion and revelation should become the matter of a single nation. It was in Israel that God prepared the future salvation. This was the nation which became the soil and vehicle of revelation, and the historical development of revelation coincides with the history of Israel.

Let us then take a view of *the course which Israel's history took!*

And this is parallel with the course which the

history of all nations has taken. Israel is, indeed, the nation of revelation, but revelation united itself to the law of natural development in the nation's life, and advanced along its path.

National history has three stages. *The first* is that of patriarchal times. In these the nation still bears the form of its original condition of a family, and is only on the road to becoming a nation. *The second stage* is that of national exclusiveness. The nation has now become a nation, and feels itself such by its special national peculiarity. But zealously concerned about preserving this, it excludes itself from external influences, and leads an isolated existence. The national peculiarity becomes the governing law of life. This is the age of law. And this national law becomes a wall, which severs the people from other nations and their influence. This age of national exclusiveness, generally consists of two consecutive periods. The most ancient states have been, for the most part, under priestly domination; this has been succeeded by military rule. Religion and its advocates, which have ever been at first the ruling power of national life, have prescribed both laws and customs, and given their own peculiar stamp to the entire national life. Afterwards secular interests prevail, the warrior class takes the lead, and national life undergoes a change. The military succeeds the priestly period, and these constitute the age of national exclusiveness. Then follows *the third stage*, in which the people and their state come forth from their isolation, put themselves

in contact with strangers, cultivate intercourse with other nations, seek to occupy a position with respect to the rest of the world, and participate in the great and universal movement of the history of the race.

Such are the three stages of national history.

There are certain nations in which one or other of these stages have become permanent, and stand visibly before us. At the very outer circumference of historical progress among the tribes of central Africa, or of the Asiatic steppes, we see nations which have not yet emerged from the first stage, the family period. These present us with a caricature of the patriarchal age. Others again have entered upon a more advanced period of national life, but are still stationary at the stage of national exclusiveness, as *e.g.*, the people of China and India. These represent the age of national law, but of law unyielding and petrified. They took the first great step in national development, but hesitated at the second and greater, and retired within themselves ; thus assuming a mummy-like state of existence, and suffering the course of events to pass them by. The third stage is represented by those nations which have agitated and civilized the rest of the world. These are situated at the centre of the historical movement. They dwelt on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, especially in Greece and Italy. Here were found the nations of universal history, properly so called. These had a higher aim in view, and cherished a more universal idea, the idea of human civilization ; but just as they

thought their goal attained, their strength failed them, their moral capital was exhausted, and they were forced to confess that they were incapable of carrying on history any farther, unless a new and higher life, springing from deeper sources than lay in their own national life, should be infused into their dying members.

Such has been the course of history in general.

And this course is repeated in *Israel.* Israel, too, had first its patriarchal age, the age when the future nation was but a family. To this succeeded the age of national exclusiveness, in which law became the ruling power of life, and at the same time the wall which severed this nation from all others. The first half of this period is distinguished by the sway of the priesthood, which then formed the central point of the nation. During its later half, the warlike king is the representative of the nation, and the vehicle of its history. With him the history of this people also begins to step forth from its exclusiveness, and to enter into relations with the movements of other nations. But, situated as they were, between great and inimical powers, this people and their state were ruined and scattered through the contests of the great empires on the Euphrates and the Nile. Yet their very dispersion was to subserve their special vocation of being the bearers and witnesses of religious truth to other nations, till they should have fulfilled this vocation, at a time pointed out by the prophecies existing among them.

Thus was the universal law of history repeated in this nation also. But its history is something more than the mere historical development of its natural life. Another power entered into and penetrated it; and this was *Revelation.* This was no natural product of this nation. Nay, rather their natural inclinations resisted this element, and it was only after passing through a severe course of discipline that their life was blended therewith, and that they were moulded to become, in a natural manner, its vehicle. Revelation is no product of Israel's history, but it is rooted in this history, which it has selected as its locality in the world. To subserve this religious vocation of being the locality and the vehicle of revelation is the marked peculiarity which distinguishes Israel from all other nations.

Let us now more closely consider the successive *periods* of Israelitish history and of revelation.

The history of Israel begins with the *patriarchal age.* On contemplating this period we behold a series of important personalities. Strong and solid natural qualities are in them united, with the power and vitality of the religious spirit. But none of them reaches the spiritual elevation of their first progenitor, Abraham. Happy the nation that can call such a man as he its ancestor; a man on whom its eye may rest with so proud a joy! His memory is a blessing extending through many centuries. It is now four thousand years since he lived; and yet his memory still lives among us. Among the religions of the world,

these three, Judaism, Mahommedanism, and Christianity, take precedence of all others. All three originated in that corner of the earth between the Nile and the Euphrates. All three honour in Abraham the patriarch of their religious faith. Even we, who are of the Gentiles, see in him the father of the faithful; and his memory is still sacred among Mahommedans, who call him by the name *El-Chalil*, *i.e.*, the friend of God. In the south of Judæa, in Hebron, one of the oldest towns in the world, the sepulchre, which he purchased for himself and his family, his sole possession in the promised land, is still pointed out. Remains of an ancient tomb are still found there, over which the Mohammedans have erected a mosque. To very few Christians is it permitted to enter this sanctuary. Everything bears testimony to the genuineness of the tradition concerning this sepulchre of Abraham. The diligence of European scholars has deciphered, amidst the hieroglyphics of Egyptian buildings, the names of the ancient Pharaohs who lived at and after the time of Abraham. These were, in those days, the honoured names of celebrated kings, while Abraham was but a wandering nomad, though a nomadic prince. But their names are now forgotten, and only to be read upon old inscriptions, while his still lives in the grateful memory of half the world. Wherein, then, lies the greatness by which he has thus imperishably imprinted his remembrance upon the memory of all ages? He occupies no distinguished position with respect to the cultivation of the human

mind. He is a great character; but nothing of what history calls greatness was peculiar to him. He is entirely without importance, as far as the natural progress of mankind is concerned. But he is of the highest importance with respect to its religious development, as the depositary of religious truth in the time of its declension and fall. The whole world was then overflooded by heathenism. From this universal deluge Abraham alone stands out like a rock through his monotheistic faith. On this solitary rock a new world is founded, from it a new age proceeds. It is in his faith that Abraham's greatness consists. He has become the father of the faithful. His faith rests upon a more ancient tradition, the oldest tradition of mankind, though supplanted by polytheism. But few witnesses to the ancient faith were then existing. In the history of Abraham, his meeting with Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, *i.e.*, Jerusalem, is related. Melchizedek * was a worshipper of the Most High God who made heaven and earth; but his faith had no future. The form of Melchizedek is, as it were, enveloped in mystery and twilight. It is an evening form upon which the sun's setting rays are falling. He belongs to a departing, Abraham to a coming, age. Thus they stand in contrast to each other, as representatives of two ages. Abraham bows himself before the priestly king, the venerable witness of the ancient times projecting into the present, but he

* Gen. xiv. 18, &c.

bears within himself the germ of the future which is before the world.

Abraham's faith was not merely faith in one God, it was faith in the God of the future, in the God of the promise. This faith was the soul of his life. The life of faith is a marvellous thing. If we would know what it is to believe, we must learn it from this life. It is a faith resting upon the word, a faith which contrary appearances do not perplex, and sure of the future in spite of the present.

In order to be the beginner of that new age which he was to found, it was necessary that he should be freed from his old natural connections. He must leave home and family to go into a land which as yet he did not even know; he must tear up the roots of his existence from their old native soil to plant them in the word of the promise alone. In the land into which he departed, and which was destined for his descendants, he had no possession but his grave. It was promised him that a nation was to descend from him, from whom a blessing should go forth into all nations. He was ninety-nine years old before the son, upon whom the promise depended, was born to him. And even when the Word of God seemed to require him to sacrifice his son, he felt no hesitation, convinced that God would nevertheless fulfil His promise, though he could see no possibility of it. Such a faith would have been more than presumption, it would have been madness, if it had not been founded upon a divine revelation; while again, we

may say that such a consciousness of God must, so to speak, challenge a revelation. More boldly has none cast the anchor of faith within the veil which separates this visible from the invisible world, nor laid his life's foundations in the promise of the future.

Faith in the future was also the soul of the *nation*, which sprang from the family of Abraham. It was in Egypt that it grew up into a nation, and it was by its Exodus that it achieved its independence. The conductor of its historical progress from the first to the second stage of national life was Moses. Moses is one of the grandest men of history, one of those forms which the chisel of a Michael Angelo loved to portray. Even they who do not behold in him the prophet of God, cannot but admire and be astonished at the powers of mind and energy of will with which he decided the destiny of his nation. He renounced a brilliant future in Pharaoh's court, to make his people's lot his own. And yet, greater than his act of passionate courage, was the patience with which he waited year after year in a strange land, and apart from his people, for the time when the hour of their deliverance should strike. It was truly an extraordinary deed, when the whole nation arose and confronted in ways the most doubtful and suspicious an uncertain future. But, terrified by the obstacles, and wearied by the difficulties and hardships of the journey, they would soon have returned to their former state of bondage, yet of material prosperity, unless the steadfast faith, and firm will of this one man had

restrained them. We admire the mental energy with which a Columbus dedicated his every power to the idea of his life, and with enduring patience and courageous faith overcame every obstacle, till he at length beheld the hoped for land. But what is this, compared with that power of faith by which Moses led forth a whole nation to an uncertain future, to bring it by long wanderings to its destined goal. He stands immoveable, like a rock amidst all the commotions of this rebellious people, his gaze directed towards one goal, of which he never loses sight; to save their future, he was able, unhesitatingly, to repel every opposition which arose to the will of that God whom he served, and when the generation, which he had brought out of the land of Egypt, showed itself unfit to begin the new history which was to lead it to its appointed end, he perseveringly waited with quiet patience till that whole generation had died out, that he might lead the new one towards its future. It is something extraordinary this power of patient waiting. His idea, however, was no merely political one. His nation was not to be such a nation as others, it was to be the nation of religion, the nation of revelation, *the people of God.*

It is this which is impressed upon their every arrangement. A nation and its laws are intimately connected. When Israel had once become a nation it could not remain without law; it received its *law* through Moses. But its law corresponded to its vocation. The vocation it had received from God was

a religious one; hence, its law too, which was also from God, was of an entirely religious character. We are accustomed to distinguish sharply between the provinces of social and religious life, and the whole framework of society, as at present constituted, rests upon this distinction. Such a distinction is a result of Christianity; but it was otherwise in Israel, national and religious life were here one. We usually, indeed, divide the Mosaic law into moral, judicial, and ceremonial, but such a division is alien to the Old Testament. Here everything has a religious significance. With the Israelite every turn and step of his whole life was regulated by law, and each injunction, down to the very directions concerning food and clothing, bore the character of a religious precept. Everything was to remind the Israelite of God and of his relation to God. The whole life of the nation was to be religion, for the vocation of this nation was to be the nation of religion.

With every other people, their national law has been the product of their history, it was not thus with Israel; their law stands connected with their history, yet it is not its product, but the act and gift of God. It is a testimony to the special covenant relation into which God entered with this nation,* for the purpose of generating therein the future salvation of the whole human race. The law of Israel was a constant memorial of this covenant, and an education for this future. Among no other people do we find

* Exodus xix. 5, &c.; xxiv. 4-8.

such a consciousness of sin as in Israel. The whole compass of Gentile literature furnishes nothing at all parallel to the moral earnestness, the self knowledge exhibited in the penitential psalms, or of the rebukes contained in the prophetic writings. Such a state of mind was the fruit of the law, and a preparation for the future salvation. Thus did God educate His people to be the people of religion. This was their distinguishing characteristic. No other nation had this vocation or a similar notion of its destination.

This peculiarity is impressed upon all the mental productions of Israel, upon all the great deeds of its history, upon the whole character of its social life. Everywhere it is the spirit of religion, their relation to God, which governs the thought and action of this people, or at least of the representatives of its national spirit. Among other nations it is the relation of man to his world which is fulfilled, in this the relation of man to his God. The mind of those are bent upon the world, that of Israel is directed towards God. They are the nations of civilization, Israel is the nation of religion.

Let us now observe the several aspects of its natural intellectual life.

Israel—I speak of the Israel of Old Testament times—had but small feeling for *Art*. Painting and sculpture were strange to this people, nor had they any independent style of architecture: foreigners and Phœnicians were the builders of Solomon's temple. Music indeed, was cultivated in Israel, but it was

essentially the music of the temple, and even this was devoid of special musical importance; at all events it had but slight influence upon subsequent church music. Poetry reached a higher grade. The poetry of the psalms and of the prophetic books can vie in grandeur of poetic aspiration and thought, with that of any other nation. But epic and dramatic poetry, both of which attained in Greece to a perfection which made them worthy of becoming models to other nations, are wholly wanting in Israel. Lyric poetry, that direct expression of the feelings, is alone indigenous, but even this is almost exclusively of a religious character. The same may be said of *Science.* The Israelite busied himself with nature, but it was in the interests of religion and not of Science. He does not seek to discover natural laws and natural forces, but only to find God. The magnificent descriptions of nature in Job and in the Psalms, are all of a religious character. He sought for a solution to the enigmas of life, but they were religious and moral questions which occupied him, and his answer to them was, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." He connected everything directly with the ultimate and highest, with God. The Old Testament has no science, properly so called, neither physical science, nor philosophy, nor ethics, nor politics, nor even theology. In the Bible we have religion, but not theology. It is the western mind which has developed theology out of religion. The Israelite had a feeling—at least so it seems—for history alone. The

Bible is on the whole a book of history, but the history which it relates is the history of revelation. All else is subordinated to this point of view, and contemplated therefrom. It was not facts, as such, which interested the Israelite, it was only for the relation to God and the history of this relation that he had feeling or memory; hence, his history is not written by historians but by prophets, the historical books of the Old Testament being all the work of prophets. The eye of the prophet was not turned to secular events but to God in history. Not the vicissitudes of ever varying circumstances, but this One ever equal to Himself attracted him. It was the eternal will of God in its historical accomplishment, and the sway of the eternal moral law over the world's course which He exclusively contemplated and sought to exhibit. In short, the history of Israel is written not in a historical but in a religious manner; its *political* life is also of a religious kind; political life, properly so called, having no existence in this nation. It did indeed form a state, and possess a constitution, and this constitution had a history. But political feeling in the strict sense of the word, was absent, and of politics, forms of government, the supremacy of national law, it knew nothing. Its government was fundamentally a despotism, following upon anarchy, and modified not by a constitution and laws, but by religion. The prophets were Israel's statesmen. It was they who took the place of the public press, and political privileges. But their interest and their

standard of judgment in political questions was religion and a religious view of events; the national was absorbed in the religious interest. In Rome, religion served the state, in Israel the state served religion. Such a state of affairs is however in direct contrast to political national life, and this mode of contemplation was carried out under the most varying aspects.

We have seen, then, that Israel was a nation wanting in culture, strictly so called; all that beautifies and enriches earthly life, and determines the position of a people, and its share in the government of the world, art and science, politics and industry, were absent. It may be called an indigent, a mentally poor, and narrow-minded nation. But it had one possession, and had it pre-eminently, and that was religion. This was its wealth. It was not called nor fitted to fill a relation to the world, but was eminently endowed for filling a relation to God. The world in which it was at home, or at least should have been, was that inner world of intercourse with God. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." But relation to God is faith in God. Israel then is the nation of faith, from Abraham downwards, to the believers whom we meet with on the threshold of the New Testament. Its faith is a faith unseduced by the whole visible world, and soaring above it to the highest certainty—that is to God. God is to the Israelites more certain than any thing else. To prove His existence,

seems to them a folly; he who says there is no God, is in their* eyes, a *fool*, while among the civilized nations of the west, "it is just the wise men and philosophers who either prove the existence of God, or doubt, or deny it."*

Every nation has its *great men*, whom it honours, in whom it sees itself reflected. Each of these represents, in an unwonted measure, one side of the national genius; but each, at the same time, implies another. And for this reason, their vocations are various. If, for example, we bring before our mind the great intellects of Greece—do we not meet with talents of the most opposite nature, with men famous for legislation and politics, as Solon and Pericles; for poetry, as Æschylus and Sophocles; for philosophy, as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; for eloquence, as Demosthenes; for history, as Thucydides? in short, who could recount the various phases of the Grecian intellect, and its representatives? We cannot fail to be struck by the vast variety; but in Israel this is not the case. Here the greatest affinity—one might almost say monotony—prevails. The individuals, indeed, differ, but the spirit that sways them, the interest they advocate, the vocation they follow—is in every case the same, the spirit of religion. Israel's great men, are religiously great men. Religion was,

* *Grau, Semiten und Indogermanen in ihrer Beizehung zu Religion und Wissenschaft*, 1864, p. 64. In this work the above thoughts are carried out, in a generally many sided and intellectual, though in some respects naturalistic manner.

as we have seen, the very soul of the nation; and this is true, not of its great men alone, for the whole of its popular life was governed by this principle.

Israel had the same forms of social life as the rest of the world. But they were governed by another spirit. Among other nations, a spirit of inflexibility and estrangement has aggravated social distinctions into rude contrasts. Here we find a spirit whose tendency was to reconcile and equalize. It was not as yet the spirit of humanity, as we know it, not as yet that power of love to which Christianity afterwards gave dominion; but it was its condition, for it was the spirit of religion which prevailed, and ruled the life of this nation. Religion was the soul of its life.

Hence *the history,* too, of this nation is a history of religion.

It advanced from the patriarchal or family stage, represented by Abraham, to the national, founded by Moses; and passed its time of national exclusiveness in a land, adapted, as none other was, to its peculiar vocation. For enclosed though it was on all sides, as within walls, and separated from other countries by sea, mountains and desert, Palestine yet lay in the midst of those great national movements, which took place, and those empires which were formed, about the Nile and Euphrates; and its high roads of commerce were accessible from all sides, being thus equally fitted for its period of exclusiveness, and its future world-wide vocation.

It reached the culminating point of its history in the reigns of *David and Solomon.* David, the victorious warrior, and Solomon, the wise ruler in time of peace, are forms very diverse from those granite-like figures of primæval times, such as Abraham and Moses, or those severe spirits of the prophetic ages, who overthrew, with unhesitating zeal, the altars of idolatry, and stormed the hearts of sinners, with the terrors of judgment. They were men of the amplest human endowments, possessed, indeed, of much force of will, yet highly susceptible of emotion, and loveable withal; but for this very reason, exposed to all those moral dangers, which so easily beset highly gifted and amiable natures. That very period of Israel's highest prosperity, which their names designate, introduced the era of its decline. And this is frequently the case. That flourishing age of Athens, under Pericles, was the commencement of the moral dissolution of the national spirit. In the case of Israel, the decline was a decay of its religious life, and a falling from its vocation of being a disseminator of revealed truth; revelation consequently became a prophetic testimony against the present condition of Israel, and a prediction of a better future.

The prophetic age is the *third stage* of Israel's history and of Divine revelation. The northern kingdom, which separated itself from the house of David, was the first to fall into heathen ways, and hence incurred an earlier ruin; but in the southern kingdom also, a heathen spirit was soon mingled with hypo-

critical piety. It was in the northern kingdom that the voice of prophetic rebuke was first raised in testimony. The remembrance of such testimony is connected with the names of Elijah and Elisha. The spirit of Elijah was like a storm and a devouring fire, and his whole life was one incessant conflict with the Phœnician idolatry, which pervaded the people from the king's household downwards. Of a gentler and milder spirit was his disciple Elisha; but the vocation of both was to bear testimony against the present. They left no writings behind them, for their vocation was not to prophesy of the future, but to preserve the present for the future. And to this were their whole lives subservient. They preached rather by deeds than words. They were prophets who wrought miracles, not prophets who uttered predictions. It was not till later, that miracle gave way to prediction. A long series of such men of the prophetic word then passes before us, chief among these Isaiah, gazing like the royal eagle, with clear far-ranging glance on present and future; Jeremiah, too, with his deep inward emotion, and his gentle elegiac mind, all but succumbing under the burden of the mighty task committed to him; Ezekiel again, that imaginative spirit, with whom every thought takes the form of picture and parable; Daniel the noble and pious youth, with the insight of a statesman, and the gift of a seer, and so many others, whom the time would fail to mention, all differing from each other in style, position, and vocation, rank-

ing from common shepherds,* up to the highest social grade,† but alike in their zeal for the cause of religion, and in the great truths they announced.

When we bring before us this prophetic host, we contemplate a marvellous historical phenomenon, which has no parallel in any other nation. Prophetically disposed individuals, and a certain presentiment of the future, are indeed found elsewhere. But here is more than presentiment, here is hope, nay certainty. Nor have we here to do with certain isolated and more or less ambiguous seers and prophesiers, but they pass before us in a long series, linked one to another like the links of a chain, and even when separated by time and space intimately connected in spirit. Nor were they men of fanatic temperaments or morbid natures. On the contrary, they possessed the most powerful minds, the clearest judgments, even in secular and political matters, and were the strongest characters, the noblest representatives of the national spirit. They were all filled with the same thought and the same hope, and they all acknowledge that it is the Spirit of God himself who puts the words into their hearts and upon their lips. They distinguish between their own thoughts and the revelations they received. They tell us how they stood upon the watch to wait for the announcements of God.‡ It is upon this very fact of their having received a divine revelation

* Comp. Amos vii. 14. † *e.g.* Ezekiel i. 3.

‡ Habakkuk ii. 1

that the certainty of their hope depends. How much soever times might alter, how often soever their hope might seem to have deceived them, how long soever the fulfilment might be postponed, and the whole course of events seem to run counter thereto, nothing could move them, they stood firm as a rock to the word of promise, and were ever casting anew this word into the stormy waves of the age. False prophets arose, earthly and self-seeking minds made an ill use of the revealed word; but they only the more emphatically opposed the truth to all delusions. The picture of the future was ever before them, their words were like the pencil of the artist, to set this picture before the eyes of the spectators; and they were continually adding new features to it. They present us with a phenomenon unparalleled in history, and inexplicable, except by the fact of revelation.

And every one who dives deeply into the matter of prophecy will confess, that the spirit of revelation has presided over it. Its power of language, its sublimity of moral tone, its depth of religious thought, all bear testimony thereto. Nor can the internal harmony and progress of prophecy be explained on any other ground.

And what is *the matter of prophecy?* A storm is seen to arise in the distance, and to discharge its lightnings upon the earth. Israel for its sins is struck by them, and its glory sinks in the dust, but the mighty and world-ruling nations who have so

basely abused the power with which God has entrusted them, are shattered by the thunders of the divine wrath. These fall under irrevocable judgments, but a day of deliverance awaits Israel. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," it is said, "she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." It is the day of Jehovah. Jehovah will manifest Himself, His kingdom shall arise, He will be a king upon earth. Such is one half of the picture of the Messianic future: the revelation of Jehovah. The other half is the prophecy of the servant of Jehovah, of the Messiah. A king shall come, a ruler of the future, of the race of David, victorious, peaceful, the shepherd of his people, the shepherd of the nations. He will be a prophet, the possessor of the fulness of the prophetic spirit. He will be the end of prophecy, and will proclaim the true word, the word of redemption. He will have to suffer for His people's sins, to suffer even unto death; His departure from this life will be through a sacrificial death, but He will change this His deepest humiliation into glory. He is to wear the royal crown and the high-priestly mitre; He is to unite these two offices in His person, and His time is to be the era of a new covenant of reconciliation, and the age of perpetual peace. Such is the other side in the picture of the Messianic future. The word of prophecy advances, so to speak, along a double road. The one descends from above, the other ascends from below; in the former it is Jeho-

vah who reveals Himself, in the latter it is the man who ministers Jehovah's revelation, God stoops down to us, man is exalted to God. How the two were related to each other was left enigmatical in the Old Testament. The New Testament furnishes the solution to this enigma, and that solution is *the God-man Jesus Christ.* The Old Testament prophecy already contained the New Testament revelation; the drawing of the New Testament picture was as good as finished. All that was wanting was to change the picture into reality, and the word of prophecy into fact. And such was the course of the New Testament revelation. Its primary purpose was not to bring out new ideas; it is full of new ideas, but they all arise from the new fact. A fact is the novelty with which the New Testament presents us. And this fact is: God and man united in Christ Jesus, that He might reconcile man to God, and found the society which is the essence of Christianity.

This future goal had been the subject of hope from the very beginning. It formed the hidden meaning, the very substance of the promise which Abraham received. Step by step was this meaning developed. It was continually being brought forth under new aspects. A constant connection prevails throughout this history. It is pervaded by one single thought—a thought not the product of man's imagination. Men are its organs, but not its creators; its servants, oftener than they think, but not its lords.

It was God Himself who inserted it in Israel's history, and it was He alone who guided and controlled its historical development. Israel subserved this idea even in the *judgments* it suffered, even in that sorest judgment which a nation can experience, the dissolution of its state, and its transportation to a foreign land. For this very judgment set Israel free from heathen temptations, and established them in fidelity to their God. To Him they have since remained immoveably steadfast, even when the mouth of revelation was silent and prophecy ceased. Centuries passed away without another word of revelation to Israel; but they cherished with unshaken faith the hope of the future, and waited for the fulfilment of the promise. Times of cruel oppression came upon them, the Syrian monarch, Antiochus, raged like a madman against their religious faith, but they chose to endure any violence rather than to give up the worship of Jehovah. The word of revelation was their stay and comfort in these troublous times. It was this which kindled the heroism of the Maccabees, and strengthened the courage of that mother who saw her seven sons die before her face, one after another, and did but encourage them to the confession which brought them to a martyr's death. The word of revelation, indeed, was swallowed up by a system of scholarship which tortured the letter of Scripture, and was alien from its sense and spirit. Yet it took up its abode in quiet and pious souls, and became the power of their thoughts and life, the hope of their

hearts, and the aspiration of their prayers. Unweariedly did they wait from year to year, unshaken in their faith did they die one after another, certain that a day would yet come which would bring the fulfilment of their hopes, and the realisation of all the great predictions of the prophets. Truly this was a phenomenon to which history can offer no parallel, a nation whose life is a hope of the future, a hope enduring for millenaries, till God rewarded this faith by its fulfilment. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." Such is the great fact with which the new era begins. With it fell the limitations of the Old Testament revelation, and gave place to the universalism it was destined to attain. So falls the covering which had concealed the bud while attaining its maturity.

Of this New Testament revelation in Jesus Christ, I propose to speak in my next lecture.

LECTURE II.

THE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE theme of the present lecture *is the history of Jesus Christ.* The history of the Old Testament revelation is the history of a hope. The fulfilment of that hope is Jesus Christ, and His history, a component part of that of revelation, its climax. It is in this point of view that we are now to consider it.

The question, however, which is agitating the *present age* is, whether Jesus and His history were really a revelation from God, and indeed the absolute revelation, or only a phase in the natural development of the human mind?

They who do not acknowledge Jesus as a revelation of God, impose upon themselves the task of explaining the phenomenon presented by His life and acts by other causes. It has been said He is the result of the union of the Judaic and Hellenic mind. But the quiet town of Nazareth, and the youth of Jesus, were entirely uninfluenced by Greek civilisation, and the development of the philosophic mind of Greece or Alexandria. It has been attempted to

explain it by the character of Galilee and its inhabitants. But Jesus is not a mere natural product, and the country and people do not suffice to explain the mystery of His nature. Every kind of greatness which we meet with among men obliges us, if we would understand it, to go farther back than its immediate surroundings and causes, even to the hidden sources of its life. How much more is this needful in the case of Jesus, who is more than a merely human genius! Every one must confess that He is the turning point of the world's history—for He gave another form, or rather another soul to the whole world, to thought and will, to external and internal life. What, then? Are we to stand still before Him as before an unsolved or unsolvable enigma. We are wont to boast that the centuries of past history are being ever more and more disclosed to view. Historical research has cast a light upon even the most remote ages. But what is all our knowledge of history, if we are incapable of understanding and explaining its great turning point. Well! there is an explanation, and that is the acknowledgment made by Christianity, that Jesus descended from above, that He is the absolute revelation, the personal tie between God and man, that in Him "the Godhead and manhood are united." This admission certainly explains His history and influence. To every other the door into this Holy of Holies of history remains closed. Why, then, is this explanation rejected?

Certainly Jesus was the *founder of a religion*, and there have been founders of religions and religious reformers besides Him, but none like Him. In the fifth and sixth centuries before Christ, we behold a moral and religious reformation pass through a series of civilized nations and countries, both in the east and west. It is remarkable how during that period the spirit of renovation seized upon mankind, and found organs of unusual intellectual stature, in the most opposite parts of the world at the same time.* Confucius flourished in China, Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia, Pythagoras and Socrates in Greece. Greatly as these celebrities differ from each other, the spirit of moral and religious revival is common to them all, though manifested by each according to his own peculiarity. Each produced a deep impression upon his contemporaries. Confucius and Zoroaster founded the whole polity of their respective nations upon the new moral and religious systems they introduced; Buddha became an object of worship to innumerable multitudes, and Pythagoras and Solon bequeathed to the world schools and disciples, which have exerted a powerful influence upon the progress of the human mind. But in spite of all this, who can say that they brought about a real reformation of human life with respect to its deepest and most secret feelings, as well as in its whole moral and social order? Their names are more brilliant than their influence, which was remarkable

* Compare Thiersch, *Die Kirche in Apostol. Zeitalter* 1852. pp. 10-14. Guizot, *Meditations sur la religion chrétienne* 1, 1864, pp. 61-64.

more for superficial extent than for depth. They did indeed in part determine the manners and customs of their respective nations and peoples, and in part give a fresh impulse or a new turn to thought; but they did not tear down their spiritual limitations, nor renew their souls. India was fundamentally the same after Buddha, Persia after Zoroaster, Greece after Pythagoras and Socrates, that they had been before. And not only did those nations remain in the same state as formerly, but their decay was not arrested. If a future still remains to them, its hope lies in Christianity. We see then that whatever great phenomena and exalted personalities history may bring before us, let them be the most brilliant developments of the human genius, the boldest systems of philosophical thought, the fairest blossoms of poetical talent, the grandest deeds of moral energy of will, we nowhere find a true and inward renovation of mankind. This is the privilege of Christianity alone, the work alone of Jesus Christ. And what is the reason of this? To answer in the words of Scripture, "He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth, he that cometh from heaven is above all." That is to say, Jesus Christ is the absolute revelation of God, for He came from above, and in Him God was manifest in the flesh. This is the secret of His nature, and it is this which explains the enigmas of His life and influence.

The life of Jesus may be divided into two periods, into the time before, and the time of His public min-

istry. The former includes thirty years, the latter three. But those three years lifted the world off its hinges.

We will first consider the *history of Jesus before His entrance upon His public ministry.*

The Apostle Paul says, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son." Not at a time arbitrarily chosen did Christ appear, nor did God send Him but when mankind was ripe for His appearing. For it has ever been God's way to connect the course of His revelation with the course of the natural development of mankind. Both met, in the highest sense, at Christ's entrance into the world. The appearance of Jesus was the supreme revelation of God, and the time when it took place was in a supreme sense the fulness of the time.

What then made this period *the fulness of the time*?

All that we know of it shows us how the powers by which life had been formerly supported, were then in a state of general dissolution. In ancient times religious and moral as well as political life was connected with the idea of the state. There was no universal religion, no general morality for all men, no relation of man to man as such. This was a thought utterly unknown. The duties of religion were fulfilled not because it was truth, but because it was the religion of the state. The precepts of morality were obeyed in obeying the commands of the state. And in others, each man saw not his neigh-

bour, but either his fellow-citizen or a foreigner. The state was the foundation of all life, but this foundation had disappeared, Greece had lost her national independence, and Rome united the most varying natures into a single empire which rather resembled a confederation of mankind. But together with their foundation, religion and morality had disappeared. A general dissolution had set in, resulting in a moral sloth, which threatened social life with destruction, and for which even they who recognized the corruption and threatened ruin, knew of no remedy. In this dissolution of the objective powers, which had hitherto been the supports of social life, each man felt his personal need, and this feeling was general. There had never been a time in which each man's own soul had so demanded its rights, and sought the satisfaction of its inmost cravings, independently of national existence. It was a real hunger and thirst of souls which was excited, though men sought to appease this hunger in a mistaken way. But their very mistakes testify to the craving and its urgency. It is indeed true, that many renounced all search after truth, since it appeared to them to be in vain. Such were but murdering their own hearts, for the soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Others plunged into self-indulgence, and sank into a more refined or grosser sensuality. But there were ever some, though few, in whom the soul's yearnings directed their aspirations, and urged their flight towards the realm of truth. In the Acts of the

Apostles, we often meet with God-fearing heathens. They are the blossom of the heathen world, and of its religious development. It is these humble and enquiring spirits and not the proud-minded philosophers of Alexandria, who did not disdain to unite themselves to the synagogue of Israel, and to sit at the feet of its prophets. They were the true fruit of the history of the heathen world, and it was they who made that period "the fulness of the time."

To these corresponded they that were "quiet in the land" among *the Jews*, those lowly and hidden ones who "waited for the consolation of Israel," of whom so many are met with at the commencement of the New Testament history. The outward circumstances of the nation could but make their longing the more earnest, for these were only too sad. The ruler, Herod the Idumean, was a foreigner, who, by his own astuteness and the favour of the Romans, had managed to put himself in the place of the Maccabean family, but had consequently to contend, during his whole life, with the opposition of this proud race, with the disaffection of the people, and with the insurrections of the Pharisaic party. He overcame the resistance of the national party by cruelties, and assassination was rife even in his own family, but he never enjoyed his rule. He possessed great talents for government, yet he stained his reign by numerous and arbitrary massacres, and died in the midst of tumult, of a terrible and torturing disease. His eldest son, Archelaus, who inherited his father's cruel disposition but not

his talents, succeeded him in Judea. Accused to the Romans by his subjects, he was, after a ten years' reign, deposed and banished to Gaul, and Judea became a Roman province, administered by Roman governors. The fifth of these was Pontius Pilate, who exercised the power of a tyrant in the spirit of a slave. If ever a man was calculated to drive to desperation by reckless cruelty and indifference, the people whom he was appointed to govern, it was he. During his government the great drama of the gospel history took place. In the northern parts of the country, however, in Galilee and the countries east of Jordan, another son of Herod, Herod Agrippa was ruling, a man utterly alien to the religious interests of his people, and one who, though not without certain good dispositions, paid more regard to his own sensual desires than to their moral convictions. It was he who was the murderer of John the Baptist. The nation itself was at this time split into opposing factions. The *Pharisees* who constituted the national party, and fostered the spirit of opposition to Roman rule as a disgrace to the people of God, had the greatest share of influence. But their religiousness was for the most part but an outward compliance with the law, and not unfrequently a mere illusion. The learned among the Jews, whose authority with the people was an absolute one, were generally of this party. The highest offices, however, were filled by the *Sadducees*, who rejected the traditions of the Pharisees, cherished a certain amount of rationalism

in their religious views, and cultivated the friendship of the Romans as the masters of the land. These formed the political party. Though the Pharisees were the actual opponents of Jesus, yet it was a Sadducee, the high priest, Caiaphas, who pronounced the sentence of death against Him. The sect of the *Essenes*, who, dwelling chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, were far removed from the public and religious life of the nation, and had their special religious customs and secret doctrines, was without influence upon the gospel history.

A heavy oppression lay, as it were, upon all minds. The desire for improvement in the state of affairs was universal. But the prevalence of the Pharisaism, whose ideal was the external glory of the people of God, and their victorious supremacy over heathen nations, caused an improvement to be chiefly looked for in a change of outward condition, in a casting off of the Roman yoke, and in the recovery of the national independence. Much material of an inflammatory nature had been accumulated. And there were times when an explosion took place. One of the most considerable of these was the insurrection of Judas of Galilee, who took advantage of the general discontent which the Roman taxing had provoked, to attempt a decisive blow against Rome, and the restoration of the ancient theocracy. The attempt failed, Judas himself perished, his followers were scattered; his spirit, however, lived in his family, and occasioned many desperate deeds. Nor did this disposition fail

to influence a wider circle; a considerable party, the so-called Zelotes, was formed, whose mental ancestor was this same Judas. It was the idea of a *political Messiahship*, the caricature of the true, which sought to achieve deliverance with the sword, and by its repeated acts of insurrection, at length plunged Israel into ruin. A small number only of truly pious minds cherished the true hope of Israel, as promised by the word of prophecy, and joyfully welcomed its fulfilment in Him who was to come.

Such was the state of matters when *Jesus* appeared.

His youth was passed in Nazareth, a small and remote town of Galilee, in the retirement of a family of mean condition, and of the artizan class. The town in which Jesus grew up, still exists; it is situate in a narrow valley, running from north to south, and surrounded by white chalk rocks, whose heights offer an extensive prospect, reaching from the coasts of the Mediterranean, in the west,* to the snow-capped summit of Mount Hermon in the north-east. The same well to which Mary, the mother of Jesus, came each evening with her pitcher on her head, to fetch water, still supplies the town. In this valley, and on these heights, was the youth of Jesus passed. The commotions of those unquiet times did not penetrate this retired spot. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, was occupied with his trade, and was, moreover, a silent man. Hence the

* Cf Tischendorf, *Reise im Orient*, 2. 197, and Strauss, *Sinai und Golgotha*, second edition, p. 356-374.

child would be more thrown upon the company of his mother, in whom were happily blended the inner life of a deeply meditative mind, and an enlightened view of the things of the outer world, her whole character being rooted in that lowliness of pious faith, which has made her the ideal of womanhood, and the pattern of humble and believing obedience to all ages. Piety was the very spirit of the family, reminiscences of the past glories of Israel, and of David's house, hopes of the promised future, prayer and the words of Scripture—such was the atmosphere which Jesus breathed. His instruction was the ordinary instruction of the synagogue school, which consisted of reading, writing, and committing to memory portions of the Old Testament Scriptures. Further or more learned instruction He never received. What He had to learn could be taught Him by no human being, He conld learn it from God alone. Communion with His heavenly Father, and the Holy Scripture, which revealed to Him the will of God—such was His school, such His home. In this He lived and worked. Here He found God, here He learnt to know Himself. In communion with God, He increasingly felt the closeness of the tie which united Him with His heavenly Father. He felt Himself more nearly related to Him than to His earthly parents. And the Scriptures which announced to Him the will of God, touched Him, in a special manner, He felt that their matter concerned Him, in a degree quite peculiar to

Himself, and His future gradually dawned upon His consciousness.

At twelve years of age, He became like other Jewish boys, "a Son of the law." It was at this age that His attendance upon religious rites commenced, and that He went up to Jerusalem to the feast, for the first time. The journey, the conversation of the travellers, the singing of psalms on the road, the city itself, with all its memories, of the times of His royal ancestors, the temple and its worship, the feast and its solemnities—all made a deep impression upon the religiously susceptible mind of the boy. His religious consciousness advanced upon its path of development—His position with respect to God in heaven, His position with respect to Joseph and Mary upon earth, now rose before Him with increasing clearness; it was now that He first expressed it, now that He first emphatically called God his Father.* He had begun to comprehend Himself. To comprehend Himself was His development, to become aware of His connection with God, His learning. He saw Himself upon earth, the child of human parents, and yet He felt that His home was with God, that His relation to God was a far nearer one, than to those whom He called parents. At first this must have seemed enigmatical. It was only by degrees that He learned to understand it. If He subsequently heard from His mother of the angelic message which had announced His miraculous birth, of the

* Luke ii. 49.

heavenly voices which had surrounded His birth in Bethlehem, this would help Him to understand Himself, and serve to solve the enigma of His existence. It is a human development which we behold, but a development from other roots than those of a merely natural existence. His life, in time, is founded upon an eternal life; and it is only from this stand-point that His temporal life is explicable. It was from eternity that He entered into time, and it was in time, therefore, that he must comprehend Himself, but He comprehends Himself as the eternal Son of the Father.

Jesus passed through a human development, but this development did not lie through *sin*. This is taught us by Scripture, shewn us by the life, and assured to us by the holy form of the man Jesus. For it is a holy form which meets our view within the frame of the gospel picture. He could challenge His adversaries to convict Him of sin, and they were silent.* He could say of Himself that He always did the will of His Father † without saying too much. He followed sin to its very inmost motions and faintest beginnings,‡ but He excepted Himself from the world of sinners, He forgave the sins of others, and taught them to pray to God for forgiveness; § but He never prayed for it Himself, not even in Gethsemane, not even on the cross. He designates Himself as the

* John viii. 46. † *Ibid.*, viii. 29.
‡ *e.g.*, Matt. v. 22, 28, and similar passages.
§ Matt. viii. 12.

future Judge of sinners,* but He is not their fellow; He sheds His blood for the forgiveness of their sins,† but needs no atonement Himself. His communion with God is an entirely unclouded and unintermitted one. It is thus that Scripture depicts Him, thus that He testifies of Himself, thus that we, too, must acknowledge Him. How, then, can such a fact be explained? What we perceive in Him is not merely a victorious struggle, in which good always attains the mastery over evil, but that spirit of selfishness which is opposed to the will of God, and against which we all have to contend in the moral struggle of life, without ever being entirely freed from it, however successful may be our warfare—that spirit of selfishness does not exist in Him. To explain this fact, it avails us nothing to speak of an innate goodness of human nature. This moral purity of human nature is nowhere found. We have, indeed, its ideal within us, but we know also that its reality has no existence upon earth. Such is the universal law of humanity, from which none descended in the natural order from the human race is excepted. If Jesus, then, is an exception, if He alone is pure among the impure, He is so, and can be so only, if the roots of His being are found, not as in our case in this impure life, but beyond it, so that He could enter into the human race without sharing in its impurity. We can only understand His sinlessness, when we understand what His disciple said of Him, "The

* Matt. xxv. 31, &c. † *Ibid.*, xxvi. 28.

Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." *

To the manifestation of this grace and truth His whole life was devoted ; this was His vocation.

We will now pass on to *the time of His public ministry.*

He had passed thirty years in the quiet retirement of Nazareth. Having grown up as the eldest son of a family, which, as we know from Scripture, consisted of several members, and having, on the death, as it appears, of his foster-father, entered into his trade and became the supporter of His mother, He was known at Nazareth as "the carpenter," † and had not as yet attracted any special notice. He kept the even tenor of His way, frequented the synagogue every Sabbath, but as yet silently, and His life was a life in God. The mystery of His nature had more and more disclosed itself to Him, but He preserved the secret in His own breast ; His future vocation was more and more plainly manifest to Him from the Scriptures, but He waited in patience ; and, Mary, full as her soul was of presentiments and hopes, was also silent and waited.

The appearance of a prophet, even of *John the Baptist,* was the sign given Him by God, that the time of His public ministry was come. The son of a priest, to whom he was born in advanced years, announced by significant signs, hailed, at his birth, with

* John i. 14. † Mark vi. 3.

words of high expectation by the prophetic foresight of his father, as the herald of a new era, John had grown up as a recluse in the hill country of Judæa, preparing himself for his vocation by prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, and an ascetic life. He was born six months before Jesus, and was to be His forerunner. In his thirtieth year he came publicly forward with his call to repentance, the symbolic rite of baptism. It was beyond Jordan, in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, where lay the fords from Judæa to the East, and where numerous caravans were, especially at the times of the Jewish festivals, continually crossing and recrossing, that John commenced his ministry. His appearance recalled that of Elias, as depicted in the Old Testament, and corresponded to his office as a preacher of repentance. And stern and earnest as himself were also his words; repentance and the nearness of Messiah's advent; such was the matter of his preaching. The two were intimately connected; for, as the Talmud says, "If Israel were but for one day sincerely to repent, the Messiah would immediately appear." Multitudes soon resorted to him to receive from him the baptism of preparation for the kingdom of Messiah. Even those who were very far from likeminded to him could not resist the universal tendency. It was a time of awakening in Israel, which did not, however, amount to genuine conversion.*

Jesus himself went to receive John's baptism. To others this was a preparation for entrance into

* Matt. iv. 16, &c.; John v. 35.

the kingdom of God, to him a preparation for the manifestation of the kingdom of God. It was His divinely appointed consecration to His mission, His endowment with the spirit of His calling; but a time of temptation and resistance preceded His public entry upon it. He was brought face to face with His future course. The vision of the future, as nature might wish it, was placed seductively before His mind. The future, to which God called Him, was to be reached by the path of self-denial, patience, and suffering. The tempter offered Him the glory without the appointed path. Jesus, by refusing the throne of the world, made choice of the cross. It was when He returned from the temptation that the Baptist hailed Him as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*

The public life of Jesus is divided into a *period of action* and a *period of suffering.* The former is computed by years, the latter by days. But the days of suffering are as important as the years of action. He began with a preparatory ministry near to John in the country of Judea; but when the Pharisees took occasion therefrom to hinder the work of God, He ceased and withdrew into retirement,† and did not publicly reappear till the ruler of Galilee had thrown the Baptist into prison on account of his courageous testimony to the sanctity of marriage.‡ He then chose Galilee as the stage of His ministry. He was there further removed from the persecutions of His

* John i. 29. † John iii. 25; iv. 1. ‡ Matthew iv. 12.

adversaries, and could the longer avert the last crisis; there, too, amidst that despised population, He met with a more lively sense of spiritual destitution. His apostles, with the one exception of Judas who betrayed Him, were all Galileans. It was from Capernaum, a trading city on the sea of Galilee, whence the highways of commerce stretched in all directions, that He undertook His journeys into the surrounding country. His Galilean ministry commenced probably in the autumn of the year 28. It quickly increased in extent. By the spring of the following year it reached its culminating point. He had journeyed from town to town and from place to place. The number of His disciples had gone on increasing; the multitudes who sought Him were more and more numerous; thousands upon thousands were seen gathered around Him. From all quarters, from the most remote distances, did they flock to Him, bringing their sick, and listening to His preaching. About this time Jesus heard of the execution of the Baptist. The intelligence moved Him deeply. It placed His own end before His eyes. At the same time the multitude gave palpable proof of the carnal nature of their expectations; carried away by astonishment at one of His miracles, the feeding of the multitude, they sought to get possession of Him, for the purpose of leading Him in triumph to Jerusalem, there to proclaim Him king.* It was the spirit of political Messianic notions that was stirring within them; and

* John vi. 15.

Jesus knew that it was this very spirit which would bring Him to the cross; for He would found the future only upon moral renewal of heart, and personal relation to Himself. His requirement of these produced a falling away among His followers. Many departed from Him, making it evident that they were of another mind from Himself.* This period, the spring of A.D. 29, was a crisis in His public ministry. Henceforward He more avoided publicity, and devoted Himself more exclusively to the task of preparing His disciples for their vocation; for the future of His kingdom was to depend not on the masses, but upon this little flock of sincerely minded followers. We now see Him wandering in the extreme limits of Galilee; at one time He is in the west, in the borders of Tyre and Sidon; at another in the north-east, on the declivities of the great Hermon; at midsummer he goes with His disciples over the heights of Lebanon in the north; His desire is to dedicate His time to their instruction undisturbed by the multitudes. They had hitherto been required with full and glad conviction to acknowledge Him as the Messiah, He now began to speak to them also of His approaching sufferings.† It was thus that He closed His Galilean ministry; it had lasted about a year, and this was our Lord's pleasant year. In the late autumn of 29, He went into the country east of Jordan, and there passed the winter in similar occupation. The spring of the year 30 recalled Him to

* John vi. 60, 66. † Matthew xvi. 16, 21.

Judea to the raising of Lazarus. The last passover of His life was now approaching; at Jericho He joined the train of travellers to the feast; and from this time forth acknowledged Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of David, and suffered others to acknowledge Him also.* Multitudes hailed Him with joy as the Messianic king, when He made His entry into Jerusalem. He had now to come to a decision; His last appearance necessitated it; and His answer was the cross.

Such is a hasty outline of His public ministry. It included but few years, but these decided the lot of man for ever.

The power of His agency was *His Word.* He came forward as the Prophet, He died as the high-priestly sacrifice, He rose from the dead as the King. Since then He has had a kingdom upon earth which He governs. But He founded it by His Word, and laid its foundations in the hearts of men.

The scribes of Israel had also spoken of a kingdom of God; but Jesus taught that it was a spiritual kingdom, and that its foundation lay in the moral condition of the heart. This He enforced with every word He uttered. Whether He spoke or were silent, His every action was a sermon, and speaking or silent He ever aimed at the heart. The disposition He required, was entire submission to God; the kingdom He preached meant absolute communion with God; but the tie which was to unite man with God was Himself. He would Himself be the medium of that

* Matthew xx. 30; xxi. 9.

communion with God which He required. He made Himself the centre of all He announced, and connected with His own *person* every moral demand which He made of man. Faith in Him—this was the state of mind He required, the source of all the morality of His kingdom, the very core of His teaching. A wondrous teaching truly, in which the teacher makes Himself the central point of all that He announces.

Jesus applied to Himself the strongest expression which the mind and thoughts of a human being could conceive, or rather that which the mind and thoughts of no human being could conceive. He declared Himself to be the *Son of God* in the supreme, the supernatural sense, and designated the bosom of the Father as His eternal abode. It is certain that it was not the enthusiasm of His disciples which first raised Him to this divine elevation. He made Himself equal with God. And it was this very saying which caused His death to be determined on. There was no misunderstanding here—for how easily could He have obviated it! Nor has any subsequent exaggeration taken place; for much as sceptics may have withdrawn from isolated sayings preserved by the evangelists, yet each has been obliged to leave the substance of their narrative; and this substance is, that Jesus contrasted Himself with the whole human race beside, and connected Himself with God. With respect to His historical reality, He is one of ourselves, the son of man, the end of history, the representative of humanity;

while with respect to His eternal nature He is one with God, the Son of God, whose home is above.

Nor did He speak thus in moments of excitement; His whole existence was the utmost tranquillity of mind. He was never led by a spirit of exaggeration, His words never exceeded His meaning; on the contrary, if we wish to call up a picture of gentleness and sincerity, it is He whom we place before us. In Him the ideal of moral perfection found its realization; He is the impersonate conscience in the history of our race. And certainly this strong assertion was no foregone conclusion on His part; it is the wisdom of the teacher which governs the whole course of His teaching. Its premisses must exist that we may appropriate His word with free conviction, and not upon mere authority. As it was but gradually that He came to the knowledge of Himself and of the mystery of His nature during the period of His human development, so was it to be gradually also that His disciples were to attain this knowledge. But from the very first, as we may easily perceive, this highest and last principle is always in the background of all His discourses, and forms the silent premiss of all His other teaching.

What right, then, had He to make so unheard of an assertion, and to constitute faith therein the fundamental law of His kingdom? His right is founded on His person, and the proof of this is Himself. We can prove to no one that He is Christ, He must prove Himself to the heart. He knew and employed

no other proof. He certainly performed miracles as His credentials. His miracles are an historical fact which no criticism can get rid of; and it was they that caused that great excitement which led His adversaries to the last decisive step. But it was not by His miracles alone that Jesus would be accredited. They could not lead to faith in Him, properly so called. Our decision, strictly speaking, must ever be a free act of faith for the sake of what He is Himself. His highest, His peculiar, evidence, is the impression made by His person, the effect produced by His word, in short, the evidence which He Himself is to the heart and conscience. This is ever the testimony peculiar to Christ. The highest truths have no other proof than that they are self-evident. The truth must be believed for its own sake; there is no other way of being assured of it than the way of inward certainty. Jesus is the manifestation of truth. He is the absolute, the eternal truth. He can only prove Himself in the manner in which truth proves itself. He is His own proof. We must believe in Him for His own sake.

And what is He? He is the revelation of God, for He is the revelation of the *Divine Law.* When we would express the highest thought we are capable of conceiving concerning God, we designate Him as Love. It is true that He is also the power which sustains the universe, yet His power only subserves His love. The highest revelation of God is the revelation of His love. And this Christ is. He, too, is

the bearer of power. He commands the stormy waves, He utters His bidding to the spirits of the deep, and they obey Him. But His vocation was to proclaim forgiveness to the sinners who came to Him, to call to Him the weary and heavy laden, that He might relieve their hearts of their burdens. He is the eternal all-embracing love of God, which became incarnate in Christ. He applies equally to all, to call them into the kingdom of heaven ; poverty is to be no hindrance to the poor, nor property any assistance to the rich ; he neither turned from the "woman which was a sinner,"* " nor denied instruction to Nicodemus the Pharisee ;"† He had a blessing for the very children who were brought to Him, a blessing which assured them of the kingdom of heaven.‡ He came for all, and seeks in all, only man and his immortal soul. His work, indeed, was confined to His own people, but his love belonged to the heathen also ; and He often declared that they also should be gathered into His kingdom. The law, too, of His kingdom is love. The world is governed by a spirit of selfishness, of mutual estrangement. Jesus proclaims a love which is the death of all selfishness, and the reconciliation of all the antagonisms of earthly life. He abolished none of the ordinances of human life, He suffered them all to exist, He recognised them all—marriage and friendship, state and law ; but He filled them with a new spirit, even that spirit of love which was to be the law of His kingdom, and the power of the

* Luke vii. 37, &c. † John iii. 1, &c. ‡ Mark x. 13, &c

new era which was to begin with it. He infused a new soul into the world, and that new soul is love.

But it was not enough to preach love, it must be produced. The mere requirement of love could never effect this. Jesus would not merely inculcate love, He would produce it, and for this something more than mere teaching was wanted. It was this that gave power to His ministry, that He was Himself the manifestation of the Divine love,—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,"*—this fact, which is the object of our faith, is the power of love. If this faith be obliterated from Christianity, and only love allowed to remain, we have indeed, the word love, but the inward power by which it works has departed. Jesus is Himself the power of His word, and it is the fact that He is the manifestation of God's love, which gives to His word of love its power and efficiency.

The love of God was manifested in His life, but far more so in His death. We pass on to the *period of His sufferings.*

The end of His life was, from the very first, present to the mind of the Lord Jesus. He had already hinted at it in many a saying, but He did not speak unreservedly of it till His disciples were established in the persuasion that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. It was not till then that they could bear it; and even then they could not understand it.

* John iii. 16.

His conflict with His adversaries had long been in preparation. Every meeting with them, especially at His visits to Jerusalem, at the feasts, had aggravated it. At last the crisis could be no longer avoided, and it was Jesus himself who brought it about. His solemn entry into Jerusalem matured the deadly designs of his enemies. A willing instrument was found in one of His disciples. The treachery of Judas is one of the darkest enigmas in the history of human nature. It might have been thought that it was doing insult to humanity to conceive of one who had heard the gracious words that proceeded out of that mouth, had experienced that love, and experienced it for years—that he could become a traitor. But of what is not human nature capable? If we could ever forget it—such a fact must remind us what an abyss of wickedness is hidden in man. And how did Judas arrive at such a climax? We know that all experience of Divine grace is two-edged. In every case it acts one way or another. It leaves no one where it found him, either he grows better or worse. This is a law in the moral world, Judas had a sense for the kingdom of God, it was a matter of importance in his eyes, otherwise he would not have associated himself with Jesus. But he shrank from his moral demands, and knew nothing of surrendering his heart to Him. The fact that Jesus more and more connected every thing with His own person, did but increasingly alienate him. Alienation grew into aversion, aversion into enmity. And thus he came even to offer

his aid to the Lord's enemies. Sophistry never fails to find self-deluding reasons to justify the act which conscience condemns, and certainly would not fail to do so in this case. Yet the conscience, though abused, struggled forth once more, and accused him of having betrayed the innocent blood.* It was, however, too late. Despair no longer suffered him to find the way of repentance. He went to his own place, and the curse of mankind lies upon him.

What sorrows rushed in upon the soul of the Lord Jesus during these last days. His whole life had been devoted to His people. And how did they repay Him? On the first day of the week, indeed. they brought Him into the city with festal rejoicings, but He well knew that in a few days they would shout, Crucify Him, crucify Him. There is no scene which takes a firmer hold upon my imagination than that presented by that moment of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, when surrounded by the jubilations of the excited and rejoicing multitude, He descended the Mount of Olives, and seeing Jerusalem lying before Him, there rose before His mind the view of the future; of His own end, and of the judgments upon Jerusalem, and "He beheld the city and wept over it.†

All that could concur to heap sorrow upon sorrow on the soul of Christ did so. His departure is the most touching spectacle the world ever beheld. More than one judicial murder has been perpetrated upon earth. But this was more than a judicial murder,

* Mat. xxvii. 4. † Luke xix. 41.

this was the most unheard of outrage to the holiest feelings of mankind. To repay love with hatred is always an outrage. But when was there a love like the love of Christ, and when a hatred similar to that which He experienced ? I am incapable of depicting the last suffering hours of the Lord, in words corresponding to the dignity of the subject. Eloquence must give way to facts, a bare recital of which will suffice.

Jesus came to redeem His people ; their authorities, however, determined on His death, and the people themselves desired it. With a full knowledge of all that was before Him, Jesus spent the evening preceding His death with His disciples, instituted and partook of the Holy Supper, and spoke His farewell words from a heart overflowing with love. From this meal Judas arose and went out, into the night, to do his deed of darkness. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus lay upon his face, overcome by the burden of His sorrows, and struggling with the woes which were rushing through his heart, His disciples being incapable of watching with Him in the hour of His agony ; then came the traitor with his band, and pointed out His Master by a kiss, while the other disciples forsook Him and fled. Jesus, being bound, was then hurried from Caiaphas to Annas, from Annas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, then back again to Pilate, enduring from all blasphemy, scorn, and ill-treatment ; but His holy soul willingly submitted to all, and the denial of a disciple, which more

deeply wounded His heart than all the hatred of His enemies, extracted nothing from Him beyond a look of reproach. Sentence was pronounced, and He was obliged Himself to carry the cross to the place of execution; His exhausted frame sank under the heavy burden, yet His love was still strong enough to address words of warning to the weeping women. The cross was erected without the city, and He was lifted up upon it; strong nails being driven through His hands and feet, and He was thus left hanging on the tree of shame, a spectacle to all men. But His first words were a prayer for the forgiveness of His people; his next, a word of promise to the thief, and of loving care for His mother. He is love itself, even in death, and under the torture of the cross. Every motion of His extended limbs was attended by the most violent anguish, the torture of His scourged back, and limbs, stiffening with cramp, became continually more and more intolerable. A burning thirst set in, the blood rushed to the head and heart, causing the most intense pains in the head, and torturing oppression of heart. Such were the torments of crucifixion, and these the Lord had to endure. He was forsaken by man, and apparently forsaken by God also. He who was always near, seemed to have departed, and in the anguish of His soul, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Out of the depths of this anguish, however, He again found God, committed His soul into His hands, and died.

Why was it necessary that He should die? And that He should die thus? He might have withdrawn from His foes, He might have escaped death. He did not, because He chose to die. And He chose to die, because it was the will of God. No other answer can be given than that He died for our sins. It was the sacrifice of love which God made in His Son, which the Son made in obedience to the Father. It was the supreme act of love, the supreme revelation of God. If the life of Jesus was the revelation of God's love, His death was even more so. And there has been nothing since on earth which has so shown the power of love as the death of Christ did.

Hatred had delivered Him to death, but love laid His body in the tomb. It was here that His weary body rested. But did He remain in the grave? Such is the question which is now agitating Christendom. A strange question truly! These eighteen centuries Christendom has lived upon the living One, and is now inquiring whether He is alive! Had we but a dead Saviour, lamentation would be our lot, and sadness our virtue. But the risen Saviour has given us joyful assurance and lively hope. For such is Christianity. Jesus is the revelation of God, both in His life and in His death, and this is Christianity. But God triumphs over death. He could not have been the revelation of God, if He had not been the revelation of a life, victorious over death. He has since been seated at the right hand of the Majesty on

High, manifesting His life in the souls of men, and preparing for Himself a place upon earth, in which the Spirit of love rules. This is the Church of His believing people below. And of this I shall speak the next time I address you.

LECTURE III.

THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

It is upon the *history of the apostolic Church* that I am to-day to address you. Before the Lord Jesus took leave of His disciples, and departed from earth to take possession of the throne of heaven, He commanded them to go into all the world, to preach the gospel everywhere, to baptize all nations in His name, and thus to found a Church which should include the whole human race. An unheard of notion! If the very notion of a common humanity had been till now an unheard of one, how much more so was the notion of a Church which was to unite in one faith, one hope, one love, the whole family of nations, with their many points of opposition and contrast. And this was to be the work of that little flock, who, belonging to the most despised of the ancient nations, without scholarship, without high social position, without the protection of the great, possessed no other means of executing this commission than the preaching of the word; a preaching, moreover, which was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the

Greeks foolishness. We could not but regard this as not merely a monstrous, but an insane notion, if we did not know that this commission was delivered to them by Him to whom all power was given both in heaven and earth. And His disciples fulfilled it. The nations were converted to Jehovah by the preaching of the cross. Jesus neither deluded Himself nor did He awaken any false hopes in His disciples. The future which He promised them was martyrdom. Nevertheless, they were to convert the world. He speaks as one who is sure of victory. They shall do it. And they did. They brought upon themselves shame and ill usage; they were even put to death for their confession of the name of Christ, but they conquered the world and founded a kingdom, of which we must all acknowledge that it is the greatest fact of history, and the greatest blessing to mankind.

The earth has already seen many kingdoms. Some of them have included half a world within their limits, and have seemed destined to endure for millennaries. We admire and wonder at the powers of mind which were able to achieve such results and create such institutions. Yet we cannot but say that all vanish before that marvellous structure, *the Christian Church.* She is now indeed being put upon her trial, but we know that she will outlast all those attacks which have at the present time attained such vigour and vitality. The prayers will yet be prayed, the hymns will yet be sung, wherewith Christians

have, for centuries, been edified, when their names who have so triumphantly predicted the downfall of the Church and of Christianity shall have been long forgotten.

What, then, is the conclusion we arrive at? That the Church is no mere creation of the human mind. Every product of the human mind is limited in its sphere of operation, and bounded in its duration. The Church would not be what it is, that edifice of centuries, that assemblage of the whole race, if it were not the creation of God, if it were not possessed of an eternal life.

The book of the Acts tells us that the first company of the disciples was filled in a miraculous manner with the Holy Ghost sent from above, who inspired them with new life, gave to their faith new joy and certainty, to their love new strength and ardour, to their hope new assurance, encouraging and enabling them to come boldly forward with their testimony to Jesus Christ, and to begin that work of converting the world which is still going on at the present hour. Such was the origin of that new spiritual kingdom, whose prince is in heaven, whose sway is exercised over men's souls, whose weapon is the word, whose law is love; which possesses in the Spirit that, at first created, and has since filled it, a power by which it pervades and renews all the relations of earthly life, levels and reconciles all the inequalities and contrasts of human society, abolishes, or, at least, alleviates the sad effects of

human selfishness, and of its dominion upon earth, encircling all with the bonds of a peace, deeper than the world can conceive.

The Church has had a varied history. She has experienced manifold changes within; she has been involved in the various changes of secular history, and has passed through them together with the world. But under all changes of time, and of her own form, she has ever remained essentially the same; the same faith, the same hope, the same love, which were the new life of the primitive church, have also determined the course, and ruled the thoughts of all subsequent generations. And all centuries, and all individual churches have ever looked back upon *the apostolic church*, as the ideal of their aspirations.

It is not merely that poetic charm with which our imagination loves to invest the past, that places the apostolic age in a brighter light than our mean present. Our knowledge of it is derived from authentic records. These furnish us with an unvarnished picture, and unreservedly disclose both sins and weaknesses. They conceal nothing, they embellish nothing. Yet our hearts yearn after the picture of those early days. This is no false romantic feeling, which will not stand the test of historical reality. Nay, rather it is our very best attribute, it is our sense of truth, which awakens this longing within us. In those early days we get a much clearer and loftier view of the work of God, than in succeeding ages, when so much

that was of baser nature, was mingled with the original purity of the new spiritual life.

Let us now endeavour to bring before us the church of the apostolic age, and its history.

In the Acts of the Apostles is given in a few broad lines a picture of those early days of the Church, which, though confined to the merest outlines, is yet distinct enough in feature, and vivid enough in colouring, to afford us a complete view of the *religious and moral* life of primitive Christianity, and to make us painfully conscious of our own declension therefrom. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." * And "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." †

The old world had raised two objections, to which it was unable to find an answer.‡ What is truth? was one; and, Who is my neighbour? was the other. The first question was put by Pilate, the second by the scribe. The former was the question of heathenism, the latter, of Judaism. Heathenism had philosophy, but not the knowledge of truth; its philosophy ended in doubt. Israel possessed, in revelation, the elements of truth, but its legal spirit had lost the inward principle of love, its righteousness was the observance of the outward letter. Christianity was the answer to both questions. And that answer was

* Acts ii. 42. † *Ibid.*, iv. 22.

‡ Compare C. Schmidt, *Essai historique sur la société civile dans le monde Romain*, &c. 1853, p. 187.

the person of Jesus Christ. For Jesus is the truth, is love in the highest sense. And Christians learned to find both in Him, they learned to possess truth in faith, to practise love in life. The former was their religious, and the latter, their moral life. Faith and love constitute the new life which entered into the world with Jesus Christ. And it is upon this present life that the hope of the future depends.

The early Christians lived together like one family. Such was the example which Jesus had set them. For He had lived among His disciples like the father of a family; when they partook of their common meal, it was He who broke and distributed the bread. It was natural to the first Christians to maintain this mode of social life. Even when they had already increased to several thousands they kept as closely as they could to the custom of meeting in certain houses for common meals; like a family which assembles at the common table, but whose members, in the after hours of the day, disperse to their several duties. These meetings were all connected with prayer and meditation on Scripture, and concluded with the Lord's Supper. For they did not regard religion as something special, and belonging only to the temple, or to the silent chamber, but it was to them the soul of their whole life, and they thought they could never too closely connect it with daily life. Besides these family-like meetings, public religious assemblies were also held, and these were employed for the purpose of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to them that

were without, whether Jews or heathen. Singing, prayer, the reading and exposition of Scripture, and invocation of the name of Jesus—such were, from the very first, the elements of this public worship.

But the religious life of the early Christians was not confined to this. Their whole life received a religious consecration. Religion was connected with their most commonplace actions. Every enjoyment was sanctified by prayer, every employment accompanied by the singing of psalms and hymns, nor was the religious element absent even from social intercourse. Religion was the soul of their whole life. And this was no fabricated or artificial matter, no result of reflection. It was the direct produce of the first young happy days of the new religious spirit, and the involuntary outpouring of the full heart when a new world of happiness had arisen upon it through faith in Christ Jesus.

We cannot form a sufficiently strong idea of the feeling of *novelty*. With us all is otherwise. We have grown up in Christian traditions and forms of life. That which was then unheard of, which pierced through soul and body, and produced an entire revolution in all the thoughts and desires, is to us a common and a current thing, and if we reflect upon it, it is perhaps only to consider whether we might not get rid of what has been made the habit of our life. Such is the fate of all great truths. Men gradually become indifferent and unsusceptible towards them, while it is the enviable privilege of early

times that the new principle which enters into the mental life appears with all the freshness of originality, and taking possession of men's minds with the joy of a conqueror sure of victory, gives them a new impulse, and inspires them with a new enthusiasm.

It was equally the case with both Jews and heathens that the Christian faith became to each a new power of life. It was a heavy yoke that had burdened the Jews. Every step, every act was ruled by the law, every transgression of its precepts was a sin against God. Who could boast of having observed the law? And even the greatest fidelity to it gave no peace to sinners. Sin-offerings were daily presented and repeated in the temple; but they were incapable of cleansing the conscience from accusations of guilt. Certainly God had promised a new covenant. The scriptures of the prophets were full of predictions of a new era of blessing. But for four hundred years the tongue of prophesy had been silent. The circumstances of Israel were every day becoming sadder. Would not the promised help soon appear? Such were the thoughts which filled the heart of the pious Israelite. When, then, in the midst of this dejection, the glad certainty came upon him: it is come! Jesus of Nazareth is the promised one, the long looked for, and at last appearing deliverer; the end of the law, the fulfilment of the promise, the revelation of peace, the gate of salvation, the way to heaven —what a mighty agitation of thought and feeling must it have called forth in the mind of the new

convert! It was true that the representatives of his nation had crucified the promised Messiah. But that would only make his repentance deeper, his grateful love more ardent.

The heathen world had devoted much mental labour to the discovery of truth—but in vain. Its noblest and most gifted spirits had wearied themselves to discover truth and attain certainty, but the edifices they erected were ever more and more undermined and worn away by the criticism of succeeding ages, till at length nothing was left but doubt and uncertainty. A series of writings, dating both before and after the entrance of Christianity into the world, has come down to us, in which enquiries are instituted concerning those subjects which agitate the mind of every thinking man, enquiries concerning God and the human soul. But, as a bark tossed upon the stormy waves is cast hither and thither, so do the thoughts of the philosophers fluctuate between conflicting opinions and fail of attaining certainty even in the simplest truths pertaining to the first elements of knowledge. It must have been a state unendurable to all earnest minds. For the soul of man requires certainty and hungers after truth. His very errors betray his need of knowledge and tranquillity. That age was an age of great errors. Every where were found impostors who sought to profit by this ardent craving after truth, and new deceptions were ever heaped upon old ones. The apostle Paul characterizes the state of the heathen world by the words:—*Without God and*

*without hope.** And such it was. There is nothing sadder than to be without support for the present, and without certainty for the future. On the other hand, the moral state of the world had reached the utmost limits of corruption a frightful picture of which is drawn by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans.† It might have been thought that the moral indignation of the earnest Christian had influenced him when he delineated it in such strong colours. But heathen authors have left us a commentary on his every word. Selfishness and the lowest sensuality were the powers that bore rule over all life; even the nobler minds could not escape the infectious influence of that atmosphere of immorality in which they lived. It was in this state of things that Christianity, with its new truths and new morality appeared. What a world of thought was thus opened! What views of the nature and will of God, what disclosures concerning the destiny and salvation of man, what prospects of the future lot of the world and of each individual! And all this new and varied knowledge, producing as it did an entire revolution of thought in the mind of the early Christians, and stirring up within them the most powerful emotions, was all comprised in faith in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and the Saviour of man. In this one phrase is the new religion expressed, in this one knowledge is that whole new view of the world, which Christianity included, comprised.

* Ephes. ii. 12. † Rom. i. 26-32.

The influence, however, of this new vital power, Christian faith, was felt on all sides. Christianity was not merely a new religion, it was also *a new morality.* A new spirit pervaded all human relations, and inwardly renovated without outwardly disturbing them. The great deed of Christianity was to effect a moral reformation without being revolutionary. But the power through which this reformation took place was the spirit of love. This was the new moral power which had been hitherto unknown to the ancient world.

A view of the apostolic church presents us with a community whose soul is *love.* It is said: "They were of one heart and one mind," and "neither said any of them that aught of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." Not an external community of goods, as communism imagines, but such a compensation of all inequalities, as the free spirit of love could alone effect.

In heathen social life the most inflexible distinctions prevailed. Women occupied a very subordinate position, children were left to the arbitrary disposal of their parents, labour was despised, and slaves were not looked upon as entirely human beings. Christianity changed all this. Unlike those impatient enthusiasts who cannot wait till external relations are altered, and often substitute still greater evils for the old ones, their furious onslaught arousing these ill spirits which slumber in men's hearts, the moral force of the new principle of love gradually abolished the effects of selfish-

ness in human society. With Christianity a new history began for *woman*. Women were as near to Jesus as His disciples, and Christians were taught to recognize in women fellow-heirs of salvation, and helpers of their sanctification. Upon the very children, too, did Jesus lay His hand and bless them, as well as the repentant sinners who came to Him, while baptism bestowed upon them new dignity in the eyes of their elders, and the Christian Church. *Labour* had been hitherto regarded as degrading to the free man. Jesus and His disciples consecrated it by their example, and made the recognition of its moral importance and dignity a common possession of mankind. The *slave* had been regarded by even the greatest philosophers as a mere animated machine. Christianity elevated him into the brother of the free man. As for political life, Christians could at first take no part in it because it was thoroughly pervaded by the heathen spirit and heathen morality. But the rights of the *higher powers* were first fully recognised by Christianity. Christianity is the spirit of liberty, a new liberty such as even the freest states of the Old World were totally unacquainted with; a liberty which manifested itself in obedience to the ordinance of God. Among the Jews of this period the spirit of revolution was rife, fresh insurrections against their oppressors were ever breaking out among them, and the result was that they were ever more and more trampled on. Christians bore with mild submission whatever befel them, and were at length victorious.

The first persecution of Christians arose on the part of the Jews. Stephen stands at the head of the noble army of martyrs; James succeeded him as the first out of the apostolic band. The heathen world continued what Israel had begun; the executive power emulating the passions of the populace. Nevertheless the apostles inculcated obedience to the higher powers, and conquered the world by means of patient suffering.

The history of the Apostolic Church passed through three phases, respectively represented by the names of *Peter, Paul, and John.* During the first period the Church was founded upon the soil of Israel; during the second in the heathen world; the third sets the seal of completion upon the history of its foundation.

Israel had historically the first right to the message of Jesus Christ, and the first Christian church was gathered from among the Jews. It sought to maintain its connection with Israel, and continued in the ordinances of the Old Testament law, in order to ensure its influence upon the chosen people. This was the period of the Church's foundation, and foundation work was the vocation of the Apostle Peter.

Hasty of spirit, and prompt in action, of quick and easily excited feelings, Peter took with him into the new life which had risen upon him in Christ, his natural quickness and excitability. Here, too, he was the man of the moment, and this was both his excellence and his danger. It was he who uttered, in the

names of his fellow-apostles, the confession which has become that of the Church in all ages; but it was he also who denied his Master. He repented his fall with tears, found forgiveness, and learnt the lesson of quiet resignation through the discipline which God brought upon him. Grace glorified his nature. To him it was given to speak the right word at the right time, and it was this which made him the mouth-piece of the apostles. For this reason, too, was he selected to lay the foundation of the Church. It was he who preached that first sermon which won thousands for the Church, and the infant community was specially under his guidance. His labours profited the present, but his aspirations were directed towards the future. His eye was turned to the inheritance that fadeth not away, and his epistle teaches Christians that they are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, journeying towards their true home.

His name designates the first period of the Church, the era of the Jewish Church, whose vocation it was to preserve the connection between the old and new dispensations.

To this succeeded the *Pauline Church*, in which Christianity burst the shell of Judaism, and the contrast between the new and old dispensations became apparent.

Paul was one of those uncommon natures, which are bestowed upon our race but once in the course of centuries. It was an ardent soul that dwelt in his

weak and sickly body. Of large and comprehensive glance, of determined and energetic will, of prompt and indefatigable activity, and of a reflecting no less than a ruling mind, Paul devoted the whole powers of his nature to the service of religion. At first a zealous Pharisee, and a furious persecutor of the Christian Church, he was converted by the miraculous intervention of Christ himself into the most zealous of His disciples, and the most ardent advocate of His cause. He now only desired to repair, by redoubled zeal, the harm he had done to the Church of Christ, and laboured more abundantly than any other. They who would know what it means to make any cause the interest of life, and to wear away in unreserved devotion thereto, may learn it by St Paul's example. What did he not endure for the sake of his Christian profession !* He was five times scourged by the Jews in their severest manner ; he was stoned and left for dead, thrown into prison by heathen magistrates, scorned by heathen philosophers ; he underwent perils by sea and by land, from men and from the elements ; he suffered shipwreck, and struggled a day and night against the stormy waves ; his sickly body placed the greatest difficulties in his way, and prepared for him temptations in which he felt the buffetings of Satan ;† yet, in spite of all, he was neither turned from his course, nor wearied out,

* Compare the narrative of his sufferings, 2 Cor. xii. 23, &c.
† 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

but marched forth like a hero to conquer the world for his Lord and Master. His path led him from land to land and from town to town. He made the great towns of the Roman Empire his head-quarters. From Syria he proceeded to Asia Minor, and filled the whole country, from Tarsus in the south-east to Ephesus and Troas on the western coast, with the message of Jesus Christ. Thence he passed over into Europe, and traversed the territory of Greece, from Thessalonica and Philippi to Athens and Corinth. His mind had, however, been long set upon the far west; he desired to penetrate as far as Spain in preaching the gospel, and Rome, the metropolis of the Roman world, was to become the fortress of Christianity in the west. Nor did he forget or neglect one of the many churches he had founded. He ever bore them on his heart, and prayed for them daily; he made their interests his own, and cared for them as a father for his children. And the welfare of each concerned him as much as the welfare of the whole; he continued to live with each, and followed the course of each; his love embraced all, and yet unwearyingly made each the object of its special care; and whatever he did, he did with his whole heart.

He supported his oral ministrations by his *epistles*. We possess more of his writings than of those of any other apostle, and perceive in them all the same ardent, powerful, copious spirit, the same deep earnestness, the same steadfast faith, the same burning love. It is that one and the same truth of Jesus

Christ which he everywhere announces, though ever under fresh aspects. It is the same language of the heart which we everywhere listen to though in ever new tones. At one time he sets us, as it were, upon the high places of the world's history, and shows us in a far reaching survey the ways of God and of man, sketching in broad lines a picture of the whole development of mankind. It was he who laid down the first broad principles of that royal science which we call the philosophy of history, as it has been cultivated since the days of Herder and Lessing. At another time he introduces us to the struggle of his life, that struggle for the free grace of God against the spirit of legality and bondage; his words surge onwards like a battle, and his thoughts rush forth with the impetuosity of a warlike host. Then, again, he touches the tenderest chords of the heart, singing the praise of love with a fulness and pathos such as no other man ever equalled; or writing to his Philippian converts in words so kindly and heart-melting as only a father or mother could use towards beloved children; or addressing Philemon, when sending back his runaway but now converted slave Onesimus, in an epistle of inimitable refinement and amiability; or longing for Timothy as a dying father might long to see once more a much-loved son, and to give him his last blessing, One knows not whether most to admire his energy of will, his copiousness of mind, or his largeness and tenderness of heart. All this, however, was not mere nature, but grace. His natu-

ral disposition was certainly one fitted to develop those qualities God had thus richly endowed him, because He had from the beginning chosen him to be His servant. But all would have been in vain, Paul would have departed without producing any result upon the world; he might at most have gained a name famous in the Talmud, but he would have been no blessing to mankind if his nature had not been renewed by grace, and his mind made a vessel for the Spirit of revelation. It was the Spirit of Jesus Christ which so ennobled and blessed him.

In the life of no other apostle do we see the old and the new so sharply contrasted as in his. "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," such was the motto of his life. It was from this point of view that he understood Christianity and the history of the whole world. The new was the revelation of grace. It was this which had made him a new man. In time past it was in Pharisaism and in the way of the law that he had sought righteousness before God and peace for his soul, but had not found them. In this way he had become the enemy of God and the persecutor of Jesus Christ. He could not but confess that the most unmerited grace which a man ever experienced had saved him from this way of ruin. He had himself experienced the contrast between grace and law, and this experience was the root from which his whole theology grew. His subsequent life was devoted to the proclamation of grace as contrasted with law. He

had to do battle for this truth. A not inconsiderable party within the Church desired to bind Christianity to the restraints of the Jewish law. Had they succeeded, Christianity would have sunk into a Jewish sect. It was Paul who burst these fetters, and preserved to Christianity its world-wide mission. This it was which formed both his special vocation and his peculiar merit.

His death was premature. He had but reached sixty years of age when he suffered martyrdom at Rome, but he had executed his commission, and his idea was victorious.

Nero at that time occupied the throne of the Cæsars. His earlier years had been of better promise, but had been succeeded by the complete corruption of his nature. He stained himself with the blood of his mother, and put to death his tutor, Seneca. Frenzy, sensuality, and cruelty had the entire mastery of him. In his days Rome was visited with a great conflagration, the most terrible it had ever endured. It raged during six whole days. A widely spread and not improbable belief pointed out Nero himself as the originator of this conflagration. His servants had been recognised among the incendiaries, and he had regaled his eyes with the sad spectacle from the tower of Maecena. To silence this report he attributed the guilty deed to the Christians, who were put to death with every refinement of torture. Some were covered with the skins of beasts and exposed to wild dogs, others were nailed

to crosses, or their bodies were overspread with pitch and bound to posts to serve as torches in Nero's garden to light up the nightly spectacles with which this lunatic emperor sought to obtain the favour of the populace. It was probably during this persecution that the Apostles Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome. Peter, as we are informed, was crucified; Paul, being a Roman citizen, was slain with the sword. In them the church lost its two firmest supports, but not before Peter had laid its everlasting foundation and Paul ensured its future.

At this time that fearful storm was gathering which was to bring about a terrible judgment of God in the destruction of Jerusalem. Strange prodigies announced the approaching visitation. At the feast of tabernacles a lunatic named Joshua suddenly began to utter a cry of woe against Jerusalem, which he continued during six years and three months, until he was mortally wounded during the siege, and died with "woe to Jerusalem" upon his lips. It is said that during the last year of the siege the brazen gates of the temple burst open during the sacred night of the Paschal feast, that at Pentecost voices were heard by the priests saying, "Let us depart hence," and that many other prognostications of terrible misfortune, which filled all minds with terror, were observed. The contest with the Romans had already lasted five years in Judæa and Galilee, and the arms of the Jews seemed to have achieved a temporary success, but the Christians were not deceived by this appearance; mindful

of their Master's prediction they left Jerusalem and went into the country east of Jordan. It was at the time of the Passover that the fate of Jerusalem was decided. More than a million men assembled in the holy city to celebrate the feast, when the Roman legions advanced, encamped against it, and surrounded it on all sides. A violent conflict took place; Roman valour and religious fanaticism contended for the mastery. Within the city faction, famine, and despair were raging. History tells of horrors that make the blood run cold, and might have turned the very sun from its everlasting course to avoid shining on such a scene. Part of the town was already stormed, but the defiant courage of the fanatic Jews still maintained the temple, and the bloody conflict raged within the sanctuary.

The day had come when the glory was to depart from Israel. Titus was desirous of sparing the temple. But in vain. It was not to be. He entered to see the sanctuary once more, when it blazed up and sank into ruins. This happened forty years after the death of Christ, on the 10th of August, A.D. 70, the same day of the year on which the first temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Its destruction had been foretold by Christ, and terribly had His words been fulfilled. Not one stone was left upon another.

Poets have sung the fall of Troy, and historians have woven the affecting details of the destruction of Magdeburg into the memory of man. But what are Ilium and Magdeburg compared to Jerusalem, whose

slain are counted by hundreds of thousands, and the horrors of whose last days are, as it were, a prelude to the last judgment?

From this time the tie which had hitherto connected the church with Israel was dissolved. God himself dissolved it, and the church subsequently pursued its independent career. The Almighty set His seal upon the work of St Paul, in this fiery sign. The beloved disciple now occupied the post of the departed apostle, and chose Ephesus, one of the scenes of St Paul's ministry, as the place of his labours.

The nature of St John was a contemplative one. It glowed, however, with a secret ardour, which at times burst forth with the violence of thunder. When, on one occasion, a certain village of Samaria refused to receive Jesus and His disciples, he would in his passionate indignation have called down fire from heaven upon those ill-affected people. Hence Jesus bestowed upon him and his brother James, the appellation of the sons of thunder. On the breast of Jesus, however, his spirit found rest, and he tasted that divine peace which imparts to His writings so marvellous a charm of sublimity and repose. None stood so near to Jesus as he did, with none did Jesus enter into so personal a relation as with him, even to his last days it was the happiest memory of the aged John to be allowed to know himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He was among the first who joined the Lord, and it was he alone of all the apostles who stood at the cross. The fidelity of the women

alone emulated the love of this disciple. He has always been regarded as the apostle of love, as St Paul has been recognised as the preacher of faith, and St Peter as the announcer of hope. And, certainly, his life was love, love to the Lord Jesus. Yet his love was no weakness. A certain degree of severity and decision have always characterised him. He would not remain under the same roof with the heretic Cerinthus, when he once met him in the public baths.

In his great prophetic writing, the so-called Revelation of St John, with its magnificent and powerful imagery, he has dipped his brush into the most brilliant colours, and the pictures in which he has depicted the great conflict between the kingdom of God and the Prince of Darkness, glow with light and warmth. In his whole manner, however, of contemplating and exhibiting events, he refers everything to the great and ultimate contrasts, in his view of the whole world, the whole human race divided into the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. A certain degree of severity and decision have ever characterized him. But this tone is ever illumined and consecrated by a depth of feeling towards the Lord Jesus, and a heartiness of affection which have made him the beloved apostle to all Christendom.

To him it was given to bring the apostolic labours to a close. He was little adapted for a far-reaching activity, having ever been distinguished for a quiet and silent spirit. But he laboured at Ephesus to an advanced age, and the image of his priestly dignity

was long preserved in the church's memory, while the traces of his mental sublimity were deeply impressed upon the church's theology. He survived the close of the first century, and transferred the church from the apostolic to the post-apostolic period.

Great dangers from within were threatening the church. Unruly spirits had arisen who abused St Paul's doctrine of liberty in the sense of lawlessness and immorality. If these were to have the mastery the church would be lost. To contend against them was the vocation of St John, and in this contest he was victorious. He banished these spirits from the church, maintained the truth of Christian faith and life, and established the spirit of order. But the centre of all his teaching, the life of his soul, was Jesus Christ. None had so deep an insight into the mystery of Christ's nature as he. He wrote the last of all the apostles, but when he did so he said deeper things concerning Christ than had yet been uttered.

Three of his writings remain, his gospel, epistles, and Revelation. These are beautifully adapted to combine into a whole. The gospel teaches faith in the Son of God in whom we have life. The epistles exhort us to that life of love to which we are begotten in Christ Jesus, while the Revelation announces that hope of the Christian which is to have its accomplishment in Christ's second advent.

Such is the legacy which St John has bequeathed to the church.

With him died the last witness of the apostolic

band, and the church has since had to go on her way without apostolic guidance. But she has her Lord and Master in heaven, His spirit dwelling in her upon earth, faith in Christ in her heart and His word of truth as a light upon the dark path of her history, and these suffice her for the accomplishment of her mission. That mission is, to be the place of salvation upon earth, in all ages, and for all people. And the future which is before her is its complete accomplishment.

Peter, Paul, John, designate the three stages of the apostolic church, and they have often been regarded as types of the great periods of church history. Its Petrine period embraces the first centuries, and the time of Romish supremacy. The Pauline began with the Reformation, and we are now advancing towards the Johannean. Such is the application which has been made of the names of the three great apostles. But whether this be a parable or a reality, there is one name in all their hearts, and that is the name of Jesus Christ. Him have all the apostles proclaimed, before Him have Christians of all ages bowed the knee. It is He who is the object of our faith, our hope, and our love, and with His name I conclude.

THE COURSE OF CHURCH HISTORY.

Three Lectures,

BY

DR K. F. A. KAHNIS.

LECTURE I.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

THE kingdom of God upon earth may be divided into three great periods. The first, reaching from Adam to Christ, is the time of the revelation of salvation. The second, extending from Christ's ascension to His second coming, is that time of the appropriation of salvation in which we live. The third, beginning with Christ's second coming, and flowing onwards into eternity, is the time of the completion of salvation. The great turning point in revelation having been already brought before you in three lectures, the task allotted to me is to consider the second period—viz., *the Church's progress*, and to sketch in broad outline the history of the society which was founded by Christ.

The world being estimated to contain nearly thirteen hundred million inhabitants, about a fourth —viz., three hundred and thirty-five millions—belong to the Christian Church, while upwards of eight hundred millions are heathen, the rest are partly Jews, who number from five to six millions, partly Mahom-

medans, of whom there are probably one hundred and sixty millions. These three hundred and thirty-five million Christians live in communities or congregations scattered over the whole surface of the world, but organically connected with each other into greater or lesser circles. The congregation or parish of St Nicolas, in this city, forms part of the Ephorie of Leipsic, which again is a part of the local protestant church of Saxony, which is itself a part of the Lutheran confession or church, as this last is one of the several churches existing in the Universal Church. The external (condition) of the Church, as of any other corporate body, admits of statistical exhibition. The chief work on this subject, Wigger's *Kirchliche Statistik*, bears on its title page the text, "Come, and I will show thee the Bride the Lamb's wife." What! this assemblage of parishes, local churches, confessions, the Bride of Christ! It is as though we should say, Man is an assemblage of bones, muscles, nerves, functions. That which makes man, man, is that invisible point of unity, the immortal soul. And that which makes these, individuals, parishes, local churches, confessions, the Church, is also invisible—namely, the invisible head, Christ Jesus, the invisible soul which pervades all, the Holy Ghost, the invisible powers which flow forth from Christ and the Holy Ghost into the souls of believers. *The Church*, considered with respect to its essential nature, is the fellowship of believers in the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost has two purposes in the Church—viz.,

first to beget and preserve believers, and secondly, to unite them. As, then, the central organ of the soul is the nervous system, so is the central organ by which the Holy Ghost attains these purposes, *the word.* The word has first the power of begetting and preserving faith. This is the *sacramental* power of the word. The word begets believers in baptism, the sacrament of regeneration; and nourishes believers in the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of the body of Christ. But, secondly, the word has the power of uniting believers according to the principles of Protestantism: unity of doctrine is an essential part of the unity of the Church. And such a unity is effected by the word, as the *word of doctrine.* To sum up, therefore, we define the Church as *the fellowship of believers, under Christ the head, in the Holy Ghost, in which the Holy Ghost first begets and preserves believers by the sacramental word, and secondly, unites believers by the word of doctrine.* As, then, the nerves attain their ends only by means of special organs, the end of sensuous perception by the eyes, ears, &c., of motion by the muscles; so also can the word attain its ends only by special organs. These organs are doctrine, constitution, and worship. These are the instruments which the word makes use of to beget and unite believers. How far these means are calculated to promote the end in view will appear when we consider the facts of this development; at present, it can only be assumed. It is evident, however, at the first glance, that the word,

in order to reach man, needs an official body, and hence a constitution, that, as the sacramental word, it requires a system of worship, whose culminating point is the sacrament of the altar, and that to be able to unite believers it must have an expression in a firm and single system of doctrine. If I may once more refer to the congregation of St Nicholas, I should designate it as a locally limited community of Christians of the evangelico-Lutheran confession, organised in one definite doctrine, one definite polity, and one definite worship. Therefore we finally define the Church as the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the Holy Ghost, in which the word, by means of the organisation of doctrine, polity, and worship begets and preserves believers and unites believers. It is not till we have defined the notion of the Church that we can say what it is that is the subject-matter of church history. Only that which has motion, development, progress can have a history. Jesus Christ the head, the Holy Ghost the soul, the word the nervous system of the Church have no development, and cannot therefore be subjects of history. That which is capable of progress in the Church, is its individual members who are advancing to salvation. But the consideration of the wonderful manner in which individuals are led belongs to a higher order of things. While our life is hid with Christ in God, who can know and name the legions who are saved? No, it is only *the life of the community* formed of individual Christians, as organised in doctrine, polity, and wor-

ship which can be the subject of history. This life, which is developed, which progresses, has therefore also a history. To show how the Christian Church has extended itself among the nations—how its development of doctrine has been progressively tending towards unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God—how its constitution has ever more and more striven to give shape and body to the Church's inner life—how worship is always seeking more closely to unite God and His people—such is the task of Church history! The theologian is yet to come, who can adequately represent this subject. We can but follow at a distance those (shining) tracks by which the Lord, in His Church, has marked His course through the world's history, from nation to nation, and from age to age.

The history of the Church is divided into three periods—viz., those respectively of the ancient Catholic Church, of the middle ages, and of the modern Church.

It will be my task, in the present lecture, to describe *the period of the ancient Catholic Church,* which includes the first six centuries.

The foundation of the Church in the apostolic age, has already been spoken of. The first particular Church in Jerusalem was, at the same time, the general Church. But the Gospel spread from Jerusalem throughout the land of Judæa, was next received in Samaria, and soon after, went forth to the Gentiles. Peter himself baptized a Gentile family—

the family of Cornelius. The Gentile Christians, however, had their head-quarters at Antioch, where this name was first applied to them. Thus two camps arose in Christendom—Jewish Christianity, whose chief was St Peter, and whose chief city was Jerusalem; and Gentile Christianity, which looked on St Paul as its head, and on Antioch as its metropolis. The controversy which agitated both camps, as to whether the Gentile Christians were to be subject to the law, was decided at the first council held at Jerusalem, about A.D. 50, in favour of the free tendencies of Gentile Christianity. In about twenty years St Paul carried Christianity throughout Asia Minor, then bore it into Greece, to turn at last towards the west, where he finished his course during Nero's persecution. It is, to say the least, in the highest degree probable, that St Peter and St Paul, the respective leaders of Jewish and Gentile Christianity, met in Rome, and that in accordance with the prediction of Christ to His disciples, that they should follow Him upon the way of the cross, they there set the seal of martyrdom to their apostolic testimony. Soon afterwards, His prophecy concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem was also fulfilled. After a fearful struggle, the holy city was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D. 70, and with it fell also the hopes cherished by many Jewish Christians of a universal kingdom, whose centre should be Jerusalem. The times of the Gentiles then began. The Roman empire became the theatre of universal history, of heathendom.

Generally speaking, this empire embraced all the countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa lying about the Mediterranean Sea. It was in these regions that the highways of historical progress then lay. Christianity, which originated on the Syrian coast, where the eastern continent faces this sea, having Europe on its right, and Africa on its left, followed the course of universal history. With giant strides it spread itself throughout the whole Roman Empire. When you consider that the evangelico-lutheran mission in the Tamul country, after labouring there more than a hundred and fifty years, has gained only a few stations, now numbering about six thousand souls, you will be in a position to appreciate what was effected by the apostles, who, in one generation, filled Asia, Africa, and Europe, from beyond the eastern limits of the Roman Empire to the utmost boundary of the west, with the Gospel. The whole Roman Empire, in fact, became the soil of Christianity. The wonderful rapidity with which Christianity spread therein can be explained, however, only in a twofold manner. On the one hand—viz., by the divine power of the Gospel which had then such witnesses as have never since been seen in Christendom. If nothing which the most enlightened teachers of the Church have written during eighteen centuries can be compared with the apostolic writings, we may infer how the words of these apostles and apostolic men, who testified what they had seen and heard, and offered in the miracles they wrought, proof of the spirit and power with

which they spake must have struck into the souls of men. But, as we are taught by the parable of the sower, the result of the preaching of the word depends also upon the nature of the ground on which it falls. And the soil of the old world was then, and this is our second point, in a state of preparation for Christianity. This preparation consisted in the dissolution of all the political, moral, and religious principles of the old world. The great Roman Empire included a whole world of states which were politically crushed, which, with their national, had lost also their moral power, and could no longer put faith in their ancient national gods. The ties of nationality, morality, and religion, which had bound individual men together, being thus dissolved, individuals naturally became atoms seeking first of all their own personal welfare. In the midst of this search after individual happiness Christianity was introduced. When we read, too, in such historians as Tacitus and Suetonius, that all the East was then looking for a universal kingdom, which was to arise from Judæa—when we consider the inclination of the age for the mysteries of the East —when we perceive the remarkable tendency of the times to follow great personalities who were esteemed divine, whether belonging to the past or the present —we cannot fail to recognise in these several particulars a presentient attraction towards Christianity. In the neighbourhood of Rome, at the present day, we behold a real abomination of desolation; yet this is not the work of the Vandals, but of the tender

germs, whose roots have penetrated into the stones, and at last torn them asunder. Thus, too, did the tender germs of the Gospel sink into the giant edifices of the ancient world, and reduce them to ruins by their gentle but invincible power. In the early apostolic period, Christianity, externally considered, bore the aspect of a Jewish sect. The Apostle Paul, pleading before Felix, acknowledges it to be a way which was called a sect. The more decidedly, however, the Jews protested against this sect, and the greater its progress among the Gentiles, the more did it assume the character of a new religion. The Romans, partly from policy, partly from indifference, were accustomed to recognize the existing religions of conquered nations. But new religions were regarded by them as not only superfluous, but dangerous. So long as Christianity was looked upon as a Jewish sect, it shared the privileges accorded to Judaism. But when it appeared under the aspect of a new religion, it was said that it had no right to exist. And thus commenced a period of persecution which lasted for three centuries and a half. Colder ages, such as the last century, have made it their business to endeavour to obliterate the profound impression made upon all men by these Christians in their prisons, on the rack, in the public contests with wild beasts, at the stake. But the main facts rest upon irrefragable documentary evidence. I will not attempt to depict to you the scenes which Eusebius, the father of church his-

tory, who was an eye-witness, describes; they would but too powerfully work upon your feelings. Such were the tortures which awaited each when questioned by the magistrate as to whether he were a Christian, and whether he confessed Christ. But the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the faith. The Roman Empire was at length compelled to own that it possessed no resources against a faith which rivers of blood were incapable of quenching. Heathenism, already dead at heart, had been driven by Christianity into feverish efforts, whose impotence could not be concealed from the far-seeing emperors of Rome. *Constantine the Great,* who had inherited from his noble father a belief in the one God worshipped in all religions, perceived that the signs of the times were in favour of Christianity. He found in the sign of the cross the victory it had promised him over his adversaries, who had placed themselves at the head of the heathen reaction. After he had declared for Christianity, it found not only toleration in the Roman Empire, but was gradually raised into the only authorised national religion. Under Julian, the apostate, heathenism made a last attack upon Christianity with all the resources at its command. But this attempted restoration was the best proof of its utter untenableness, and by about the year 400, heathenism was entirely dissolved.

Having surveyed the soil on which the Church was founded, we have now to consider the building which was raised; in other words, the *constitution* of the Church.

The Church, as we have seen, consists in and of individual *churches.* These churches were, for the most part, town churches. Christianity spread from the greater cities, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome, into the less, and from the cities in general into the country. Heathenism maintained itself longest in the country, whence it was afterwards called the religion of the country people (*pagani.*) In such city churches the conduct of all spiritual matters was in the hands of the elders (*Presbyteri*), who formed a body (*Presbyterium.*) The special office of the presbyters was the conduct of the Church. They had to take the charge of the Word and Sacraments, to watch over individual souls, over the relation of the Church to other churches, and to care for public worship. But they were by no means the only teachers and evangelists, the only ones who had the care of souls, the only leaders of public devotion. In the early churches, whoever possessed the gift of teaching, taught; whoever possessed those of faith, of tongues, or of prophecy, edified the flock; whoever had the gift of government governed. Of the power and fulness of the first gifts of grace, we possess but the ruins. It was the direction only of these gifts and powers which was committed to the elders for the edification of the flock; they were assisted by the deacons, who had the care of the sick and poor. It is the tendency of every corporate body to seek a personal head. Hence it was perfectly natural that in the presbyteries one should

become more and more prominent, the first among equals, the *bishop*. In the post-apostolic period the office of bishop was universally prevalent. To that of deacon were added those of reader (*Lector*), singer, (*cantor*), door-keeper (Ostiarius), &c. In the second century every Christian still knew that whoever had the anointing of the Spirit was a priest, whose office it was to show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. But it could not but happen that in proportion as the supernatural abundance of those gifts which entitled to office in the Church diminished, the ordinary performance of official duties should be more and more committed to ordained officials—*i.e.*, to bishops, elders, and deacons. These ordained officials were soon bound together by the consciousness of belonging to a separate class called *Clerus*, to distinguish it from the mere *laity*. And when once this notion had taken root, the idea of the Old Testament priesthood was not far removed, the bishop being compared to the high priest, the elders to the priests, (the word priest having arisen from presbyter), the deacons to the Levites. It is known that by about the middle of the third century, both the duties and privileges of the Old Testament priesthood, were conceded to the clergy. *Cyprian*, Bishop of Carthage, specially advocates this view in his usually emphatic manner. Indeed, the very principle of his life may be said to have been the maxim that the unity of the Church rests upon episcopacy. Their

connection may be thus stated. The bishop, who was at the head of the body of presbyters, was also the head of the church (*Gemeinde*) in general: he was, in fact, its personal point of union. His sphere of authority, however, soon spread from the town into the surrounding country. The country churches were generally founded by the town church, and such a newly-formed country church would solicit from the town church, over which the bishop presided, the services of a presbyter, which presbyter was called a *parochus*, and his church a *parochia*. This parochus, however, maintained his presbyterial relation to the bishop of the town. Thus a greater or less number of these country churches would group themselves around the episcopal town church, and form together with it a diocese. This union into a diocese is the foundation of all united church government. The bishops of the same province naturally occupied various mutual relations. From the middle of the second century their intercourse began to assume the form of provincial synods, which met generally twice a-year, viz., in spring and autumn, to consult upon the ecclesiastical affairs of the whole province. These provincial synods were usually attended by the bishops only, and being regarded as representative of Christendom, the saying of Cyprian, that the unity of the church depends upon episcopacy, is to be understood in connection with this fact. The bishops of a province assembled in the provincial capital in which, indeed, the various high roads of the province met.

With this external reason was connected also an ecclesiastical one. Christianity, as we have seen, had generally spread from the capital to the smaller towns of the province. The church of the provincial capital, the mother town (metropolis) was the mother church of the provincial churches. Hence the bishop of the capital, also called the *metropolitan* (archbishop), took precedence over the other bishops, presided at the synods, and had the superintendence of the churches of the province. Thus the church of the Roman Empire was divided into a number of provincial churches, each under its respective metropolitan. Among these metropolitans, however, those of the capitals of extensive regions, such as Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome, had the greatest authority, and were called *patriarchs*. The constitution of the church had its origin in the constitution of the Roman State; in the villages were pastors (*parochi*); in the towns, bishops; in the provincial capitals, metropolitans; in the capitals of large regions, patriarchs. This whole system was unmistakeably tending towards an ultimate head, who could only be found in Rome itself, the metropolis of the world. The first place, the *primary*, could not but be awarded to the bishop, the metropolitan, the patriarch of the world's capital. Hence the fourth general council, whose utterances, according to Romish views, are inspired, expressly declares that the fathers have conceded to the Romish See the first place, because Rome is the capital of the world. To this claim was

added the fact, that the church of Rome was not only an apostolic church, and that in which, according to a venerable tradition, the apostles Peter and Paul finished their courses; but was, moreover, the only apostolic church of the west, and the founder of many of the western churches. Since then the western church, in its conflicts with the heretics of the times, appealed to tradition, it was but natural that it should lay the greatest stress upon the tradition of the only apostolic church. Every other church, says Irenaeus, the spiritual grandson of St John, 'ought to agree with the Roman Church. To this was added, in the third century, the opinion that the Roman bishops were the successors of St Peter, to whom his primacy had been transferred. While the patriarchs of the east were exhausting themselves with endless controversies, the Roman bishops exhibited an orthodox regularity, and a characteristic steadfastness of adherence to the doctrines they had once received, which gradually led to the opinion that where Rome was there was truth. Thus, at the end of the first six centuries, the church presented the appearance of a firmly compacted organism, whose head was Rome. And this organism struck its roots deeply into the soil of the world. The unprejudiced investigator will be obliged to confess that in spite of persecutions, the whole edifice of the church's constitution, a constitution parallel in its component parts with that of the Roman Empire, was advancing towards that *alliance with the State* which afterwards took place under Constantine. In this

alliance the church had to make concessions to the State, and we accordingly find the Eastern emperors in possession of a powerful influence over the church. But, yet more important were the powers and privileges conferred upon the church by the State. Every Roman citizen being, as such, a member of the church, her numerical strength was enormous. The State bestowed upon her the rights of a corporation, rights fruitful in results, for in the course of a century the tenth part of all estates had become her possession. The State, also, recognised spiritual courts, admitted ecclesiastical among civil laws, gave political sanction to the celebration of Sunday, granted certain privileges to the clergy, &c. In short, by this union with the State, the church reaped a rich harvest in numbers, property, and privileges. With these worldly goods, however, the worldly spirit could not fail to find an entrance.

The *interior* of the edifice is now to be considered, and, first, *the Christian life.*

There was but little about the early Christians that was calculated to attract either the masses, or the educated classes. The manner in which they were regarded by the latter, appears especially from the characteristic notices of that well-known mocker at religion, Lucian, in his Peregrinus, and from the fragments which remain of the writings of Celsus against the Christians. They were looked upon as a narrow-minded, fanatic set, slaves to a boundless superstition, and more to be despised than feared. The common

people disseminated slanders of every kind concerning them, and they were hated, if for no other reason, on account of their separation from others, their retirement from the world, and their secret assemblies. They were called atheists by those who had no notion of a God to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. For what, it was asked, do these brethren and sisters frequent their love feasts in the evening? For debauchery. Nay, even the Lord's Supper became the occasion of a report, that they were accustomed to slay a child at night, and to ratify their secret union by its blood. In the times of St Peter and St Paul Christians were so hated in Rome that Nero was able to fasten the guilt of the conflagration upon them. When contests with wild beasts were desired, Christians were clamoured for. When, on one occasion, a drought prevailed, it was said that if some Christians were thrown to the lions, there might be hope of rain. When, however, we direct our view to the internal aspect presented by the Christian community, our first impression is that it was pervaded by *a new life.* The heathen saw with astonishment that these poor and uneducated people had a more intellectual notion of God than any philosopher had yet entertained. The cold and unsusceptible Romans, who thought excitement and emotion unworthy of a man, could never understand this strange enthusiastic love for God and the brethren. It was incomprehensible to Celsus how men could love one another without previous acquaintance. That heavenward attraction which enabled

Christians to forego the possessions and enjoyments of the world, was an enigma to the heathen. Yet none could fail to recognise the moral earnestness which prevailed among them, the love which shunned no sacrifice, the heroic composure with which these otherwise retiring and tender souls encountered death for their faith, and the miraculous powers which were manifested among them. Many Christians possessed the gift of healing, and the power of casting out devils was almost universal. They exhibited a *faith* to which the Triune God was no object of a cold scientific conviction, capable of weighing to a nicety the *pros* and *cons* of an argument, but a heavenly reality, more certain than their own life. They manifested a *love* which did not abolish natural relations, but breathed into them a celestial glory. What a bond there is, says Tertullian, between two believers. They pray together, they together frequent the Lord's Supper, they share joys and sorrows, they together visit the poor and the sick, they emulate each other in spiritual songs. Where two are thus united Christ is present, and where He is evil is not. The watchword of Christians in this life was: In the world, but not of the world. Christians, says an apostolic man, live in the flesh but not after the flesh. They dwell upon earth, but their conversation is in heaven. They are poor, yet make many rich. They are persecuted, yet they bless. They are the soul dwelling in the body of humanity. The Christians of that age, following as they did in their

Lord's footsteps, and bearing His cross through a world then under the sway of heathenism, could not but sternly and strictly set themselves against all participation in a worldly life. They avoided pomp of all kinds, abstained from frequenting theatres, renounced worldly offices and possessions, and lived in the world in a state of constant preparation for departing from it. Our life is a warfare, was ever their confession. And what sustained them in their struggle was that glance of *hope* which was fixed upon the heavenly Jerusalem where Christ sits at the right hand of God surrounded by the saints of heaven and the saints of earth. Christians did not, like the heathen, burn the bodies of their departed friends, but buried them as precious remains, whose origin was the breath of the Creator, in which the image of Christ had been reflected, and which, like the decaying seed corn, would one day arise as glorified bodies. The grave was to them but a slight wall of partition, unable to abolish the communion of those who were united in the Lord. Those who slept in Him were remembered at the Holy Supper. The remains of the martyrs received special honour. The dark and terrible catacombs, into which the Christians descended in times of persecution, that they might, while thus upon the very threshold of eternity, worship the Father, Son, and Spirit, are still in existence.

This Christian life of faith, hope, and love bore within itself the God-ordained necessity of raising itself to communion with God in public worship.

The early Christians had, besides the temple and synagogue services which the Jewish Christians frequented, a twofold worship. They assembled in the forenoon for the Word of God, which they read, meditated upon, and applied to their daily life. In these meetings those who were without could also participate. In the evening they assembled in houses to celebrate the love-feast, terminating in the Lord's Supper. In these only believers could participate. Great offence was taken at the love-feast, and in times of persecution they were compelled to omit it. This they were willing to do, as it rested on no divine command. What they could not, however, give up was the Lord's Supper; hence, after the beginning of the second century, it was separated from the love-feast, and united to the morning worship. In conformity with its origin, the worship of Christians was divided into two parts—the ministration of the Word, which was also for those as yet without the Church (*missa catechumenorum*), and the ministration of the Lord's Supper, which was for believers only (*missa fidelium.*) The first part of the service consisted of prayer, of singing, reading a portion from the epistles, and another from the gospels, of preaching and common prayer. The second part was introduced by an exhortation to the kiss of charity, to lift up the heart, to give thanks to the Lord, and the *Trisagion;* it then proceeded with the consecration of the elements, accompanied by prayer for the living and the dead in the Lord, culminated in the distri-

bution of the bread and wine, at which the clergyman said, The body of the Lord: the receiver, Amen; and concluded with thanksgiving. Thus the congregation, by prayer, by edification in the faith, by offering the memorial of Christ, raised themselves in spirit towards God, that God might come down in the Spirit to them by means of the Word and Sacrament. As certainly as this communion of the Church with God was a spiritual one, so certainly was an external expression of it necessary. God himself has, in the sacraments which dispense heavenly gifts under earthly coverings, acknowledged the rightfulness of external forms. In the apostolic and post-apostolic periods, however, great freedom of form prevailed. Every day on which God might be invoked was esteemed holy; and meetings were held now in private dwellings, now in catacombs, now in houses belonging to the congregation, and called churches. Prayer, singing, and edifying discourse were marked by their simplicity. But the more the churches became regularly constituted bodies, the more pressing was the need of appointed *times, places, and forms.* Even in the apostolic period, the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection, had been distinguished as that on which the congregation assembled in the name of the Lord. To this was joined the Friday as a day on which prayer and fasting were appropriate, in remembrance of his death. From those days of the week, however, on which the death and resurrection of Christ were remembered, arose in connection

with the Jewish Passover the yearly commemoration, *Easter*. If the weekly remembrance of Christ's death were preceded by a forty hours' fast, its annual commemoration was preceded by one of forty days—Lent. In the third century the Christian festival of Whitsuntide, in remembrance of the outpouring of the Spirit, was instituted, after the pattern of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which was celebrated seven weeks after the Passover as the feast of Harvest. The interval between Easter and Whitsuntide was a time of rejoicing. It was not till the fourth century that the celebration of Christmas, in remembrance of the birth of Christ, originated. Thus the cycle of Christian festivals, which corresponded with the *natural year*, was completed. In the dark season of Christmas, when men gather round the earthly light, that light was remembered which bestowed a new brightness upon the world. During the period when the energies of spring are invisibly working among the dead trees, self-examination was carried on amidst prayer and fasting, till at the time of all nature's resurrection the resurrection of the Lord was celebrated. The fifty days of rejoicing between Easter and Whitsuntide answered to the pleasant season of nature's blossoms and growth. Each year of festivals repeats the three great periods of the kingdom of God. The period of frequent festivals, from Christmas to Whitsuntide, answers to the period of the manifestation of salvation, that bare of festivals after Whitsuntide to that of the appropriation of salvation,

and the time of Advent to that age which will dawn with the Lord's second coming. So long as the times of persecution lasted, the *buildings in which Christians assembled* were but the work of need and poverty. But when, after the days of Constantine the Great, the Church had obtained a firm footing in the world, they began to assume a more artistic form: upon the foundations of the ancient courts of justice, called Basilicæ, arose Christian Basilicæ. Three colonnades, the middle one high, the two on each side of it lower, formed the nave, the place of the congregation. Rows of columns united by arches terminated in the triumphal door, which led to a cross nave or transept, where was the altar, and in which, where it was rounded off towards the east by the so-called *Concha*, sat the clergy in a semi-circle around the bishop. We have here a picture of the church, at the entrance sat the catechumens and penitents, in the nave the laity, in the concha the clergy. The nave leading through the triumphal door to the place of the altar and the clergy, was a picture of the church militant tending towards the church triumphant. The height of the mid nave signified that our conversation is in heaven. The shape of the cross formed by the transept declared the cross to be the Church's distinctive mark upon earth, the space in the east announced the future when the heavenly Jerusalem shall descend. The worship in which the spirit of the Church was expressed by holy times, places, and acts, took *art* into its service. It built churches, which were to be symbols of

the Church, painted sacred pictures, clothed prayer with the charms of harmony, gave to homilies the character of sacred eloquence, and required for the service of the altar, lights, incense, tabernacle, costly vessels, splendid vestments, graceful postures and gestures. In the times after Constantine, that posture of preparation for departure, in which the Lord's second coming had been waited for, gave place to a frame of mind which said: It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles. And as the boundaries between the Church and the world were destroyed upon earth, so was the boundary which separated God and the saints obliterated in heaven, and the latter were soon regarded as mediators between earth and heaven. The effort to make the heavenly, earthly; to render the invisible, visible; seized in the East more upon pictures, in the West upon relics. In all this worship of saints, pictures and relics, the heathenism still powerful in many hearts, found nourishment. Among the multitudes who now flowed into the church, were multitudes of the worldly, a fact which may help us to understand that the unworldly and self-sacrificing spirit which during the first centuries had been nourished by persecutions, should now cast itself into the *cloisters* in which the noblest spirits of the age were then preaching the word. The Church made use of the powers of the old and failing world to render her organization strong and powerful, without bestowing upon the old world those vital powers which might renew it.

It is in *doctrine* that the life which pervades the Church shews consciousness of its origin and future blessedness. The Church is a spiritual personality, acquainted with that word by which she is governed under the respective forms of faith, creed, doctrine, theology. Faith in Christ rests upon the apostolic word, which existed under a two-fold form, *viz.*, as the spoken and the written word. What all the apostles had orally deposited in the Church's consciousness, certain apostles upon special occasions deposited in gospels and epistles. The oral preaching of the apostles, as propagated by the Church's consciousness, was called *tradition*. Its summary is the apostles' creed. Some time must have elapsed before the writings of the apostles were collected into a whole. It was about A.D. 200, that the essential component parts of the apostolic writings were settled, differing opinions being still entertained concerning some of the accessory parts. As the apostles could not contradict themselves, the traditional and written word were of course in strict accordance. Tradition and scripture are but two streams flowing from one source. Who will deny that the apostolic symbol is in conformity with scripture? The apostolic word, then, as given in writing and by tradition, was the authority for the faith of the ancient church. The sum of this word was belief in the Father, Son, and Spirit. But the Church felt the necessity of establishing what she believed. As each individual Christian inevitably desires to reconcile that which

he esteems true through faith, with that which he knows to be so by other means, so also is the Church not merely impelled but constrained to arrange in a scientific manner the various matters of her faith. Wherever we find the Church, we find also the Church's science, *viz.*, *theology*. This way, however, of systematizing that which the Church knows by faith involves the danger of error, *viz.*, of erroneous doctrine or heresy. The ancient catholic church was much disturbed by *false teachers* or *heretics*.

Every well-informed Christian knows how earnest were the warnings, even of the apostles, against false teachers. In the judgment of the ancient church the source of all false doctrine was that self-seeking which would not bow to the decision of the church, but rather sought to subject it to the conclusions of its own reason. All the numerous heresies of the three first centuries may be referred to two fundamental tendencies; to a Judaizing spirit which, to speak in the words of scripture, sought to put new wine into old bottles, *i.e.*, regarded the Christian Church and its faith as merely a completed Judaism, and to a heathen spirit of striving after worldly wisdom, which diluted Christianity with the philosophic axioms of the age. The first tendency was called Ebionitism (the Judaic Christian sect), the second Gnosis (higher knowledge). These heresies were not slight modifications of church doctrine, but errors which threatened the very essence of the gospel. The Judaic tendency saw in Jesus a mere man, and maintained the power

of the law as a condition of salvation. The Gnostic suffered all evangelical energy to evaporate in mere ideas, which were, moreover, at variance with the fundamental principles of Christianity. To sanction these heresies would have been to endanger the very foundations of the faith. Hence church teachers felt called upon to state the truth in its scriptural purity. While heretics were thus obscuring the purity of the gospel, Jewish and heathen scholars were, at the time when the Roman empire was actually contesting the Church's right to existence, disputing the truth of Christianity. Hence the teaching of the Church during the three first centuries could not fail to be of an *apologetic* cast. Church teachers during this period had to defend the Church against heretics, Jews, and heathens. In the case of the Jews the matter in dispute was simply whether Jesus were the Messiah or not. The Jews acknowledged the Messianic prophecies, but not their fulfilment in Christ. When opposed to heathens, the defenders of Christianity had first to repel the accusations of atheism and immorality, and of being dangerous to the state. From the defensive, however, they proceeded to the offensive, by proving that heathenism was opposed to the eternal laws of truth, religion, and morality. Without truth as a whole, heathenism was not devoid of truths in certain particulars, these relative truths, however, led to Christianity, in which the divine reason had appeared in person. Hence these apologetic works treated of

matters which concerned the very essence and truth of Christianity. There was a difference, too, in the views respectively entertained by the Eastern and Western churches. The Eastern church, trained in Grecian learning, regarded the incarnation of the Divine Word in Jesus as the essence of Christianity, the western, which had grown on Roman soil, saw in it chiefly a new body of morality. This distinction is most plainly evidenced in the fathers, Justin Martyr and Augustine.

Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the second century, led by his anxious pursuit of truth from one school of philosophy to another, at last believed he had met with it in the Platonic ideal world. One day as he was walking by the sea-shore absorbed in thought, he met an aged man who showed himself far better versed in the Platonic philosophy than Justin, and who yet proved to him that it did not give what it promised, the knowledge of God, that incontrovertible truth, was to be found only in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, which were the voice of the Spirit of God, and that the sum of this divine revelation was the word manifested in Christ.

If the essence of Christianity is here placed in the manifestation of the truth in Christ, Augustine, on the contrary, finds it to be that power of God by which man's moral renovation is effected. He, too, had gone from one system to another without finding satisfaction. He had sought after wisdom in the manner of the ancients, had for nine years devoted himself to Mani-

cheism, been led, by means of reading Plato, to the contemplation of the Word of St. John's gospel, yet was still without finding a truth capable of arresting his deeply-agitated spirit, or renewing his moral nature. He afterwards learned, during a sharp conflict, that grace alone can make man a new creature. If in the former case the chief aspect of Christianity was truth, it was in this, renewing grace. The Church, after the time of Constantine, having no longer to maintain an external conflict for its rights, the apologetic tendency receded, and its place was occupied by efforts to perfect a *system of doctrine* in opposition to heretical deviations from the faith.

Conformably with their respective characteristics, the Eastern Church grasped the speculative dogmas of of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ; the western, the practical doctrines of sin and grace. In the beginning of the fourth century Arius brought forward the doctrine that Jesus, though indeed a person who was with the Father before the foundation of the world, was not begotten of the Father, but created by His will, and the first of creatures. The Holy Ghost, too, was declared to be only a created being. At such a statement the whole Church was up in arms. If hitherto only lesser councils had been held, synods of the whole empire were now convoked at Nice in A.D. 325, and at Constantinople in 381. These gave their decisions in favour of the doctrine that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the three equal persons of the one Godhead; the Son, begotten of the Father,

the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father. Since this period the Church has taught that in the unity of the Divine Essence exist the three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit.

A new contest began in the fifth century, which lasted till the end of the seventh without being even then finally settled. Two schools of theology existed —the Alexandrian, which sought after the speculative reconciliation of opposing doctrines, and the Antiochian, which sought their logical distinction. The axiom that Christ, the God-man, is the personal unity of the divine and the human was common to both. But the speculative Alexandrian taught that the divine and human were not two natures, but only two sides of the same nature, as soul and body are the two parts of the one human nature, thus teaching one nature. The Antiochian, on the other hand, sharply distinguishing between the two natures as finite and infinite, taught that the person of Christ so included the two natures that the divine did not come in contact with the human, nor the human with the divine. For centuries were these opposing views in conflict without being able to effect a reconciliation, producing the heretical separation of the Monophysites and Nestorians; the former maintaining, upon the basis of the Alexandrian view, the doctrine of one nature; the latter insisting upon two. The result of this contest was the doctrine that two natures—the divine and human—co-exist in the unity of Christ's person. How such a relation exists the ancient church was unable to define.

In the west, about the commencement of the fifth century, Pelagius asserted that man, being by nature without original sin, was in the same state as Adam was before the fall, and capable, by virtue of his freedom, of performing the will of God, and thereby obtaining salvation. He did not, however, deny that God granted grace to man, which grace he at one time made to consist in man's disposition to what was good, at another in God's sending His Son; now in the pardon of man's sin, now in the assistance of his natural virtue. Augustine, on the other hand, advocated, from his own deep experience, the doctrine that from Adam, in whom all mankind was latent, had proceeded a stream of corruption, by reason of which all men were by nature spiritually dead, and exposed to eternal death, unless God, before the foundation of the world, had predestined a certain number to salvation, of which they became sharers through grace—*i.e.*, the new life of the Holy Spirit. Triumphant as Augustine was over the Pelagians, his followers were not able to obtain, in opposition to more moderate views, the universal recognition of the doctrines of the utter corruption of mankind, and of grace working all in all. On these points also the ancient Church came to no dogmatic decision.

To sum up, Jesus Christ, the Head of His Church, did, both by the word and sacraments, build up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, a Church whose principal seat was the Roman Empire, and which consisted of many individual Churches all

organically comprised under one general government, which found its culminating point in Rome, all worshipping God at sacred times, in sacred places, and by essentially agreeing forms of worship, and all united in the confession of the Triune Jehovah. This organism was stronger than the Roman Empire on whose soil it stood, and unshaken by the storms of the northern incursions, it entered into alliance with the youthful German nations who took root among the ruins of that state. The relation, however, of the Church to the German nations is the characteristic relation of the Middle Ages.

LECTURE II.

THE MEDIÆVAL CHURCH.

The Middle Ages of the Church occupy a period extending from A.D. 600 to 1517. The relation of the Church, which had found its culminating point in Rome, to the Germanic nations is their characteristic circumstance. This great period may again be separated into two. During the first, namely, that reaching from Gregory the Great to Hildebrand (afterwards Gregory VII.), *i.e.*, from 600 to 1050, Church and State were permeating each other for the mutual furtherance of their respective interests. During the second, the climax of the Middle Ages, from about 1050 to 1250, *i.e.*, from Gregory VII. to the death of the last great Hohenstaufen, Frederick II., a great contest was waged between the Papacy and the empire, from which the Church came out on the whole victorious. In the three centuries, however, from the death of Frederick to the Reformation, from 1250 to 1517, the powers of the Middle Ages became more and more detached from the Roman See, until that reform for which they were with united efforts struggling was effected in the Reformation.

During the first period were laid the foundations of those nations upon which the Church in Europe rests to this very day. The Germanic populations penetrated the Roman empire from the east of Europe, shook the very foundations of the eastern empire, and destroyed the western, to form lasting monarchies in western Europe, in Italy, Germany, England, France, and Spain. Among these states, founded upon the ruins of the western empire, we must however distinguish between the Germanic states, in which the German element consumed the remnants of existing nations, such as Germany, England, Scandinavia; and the Romanic nations in which the German element assimilated to itself the still intellectually powerful Roman element, such as Italy, France, Spain. The territories of eastern Europe, evacuated by the Germans, were soon occupied by the Slavonic races, who founded states in Russia, Moravia, Poland, and Bohemia, and penetrated into Germany as far as the Saal and the Elbe. The centre of gravity, whether of secular or ecclesiastical life, was not situated in the eastern empire, and an unbending exterior, spiritless formalities, and miserable factions marked the respite of its infirm existence at Constantinople. It was there that the eastern Church had its headquarters. And the Church resembled the State—it fed upon the fragments that were left from Patristic times, and inheriting from the ancient Greek Church the tendency to logical distinction of doctrine, yet incapable of carrying on the mental labours of the Fathers, she made it her task faithfully to preserve the

old Greek dogmas which she calls orthodoxy. She succeeded in drawing within her pale certain nations, such as the Bulgarians and Russians, but her missionaries brought with them not life, but settled dogmas and established forms. Her extension eastward was restrained by the Mahommetans. The western Church has ever been distinguished from the eastern by differing characteristics. In the east Christianity had more the form of doctrine, in the west more that of practice. To these were added minor differences in doctrines and worship. To a Church, however, which esteemed great matters as small, and small ones great, these minor differences seemed so important that in the middle of the eleventh century it ceased to hold communion with the western Church. And this separation between the eastern and catholic Churches exists to this day. Rome, however, with its happy instinct for all that had life and promise, united itself to the Germanic nations. Gregory the Great, who forms the point of transition from the ancient to the mediæval Church, projected an alliance with the Franks, of whose importance he entertained a presentiment.

Wherein, then, lay the vital power of the Germanic nations? The Eastern nations form the first, the Classic the second, the Germans the third link in the chain of general historical development. The east lived upon authority, tradition, mystery. What was true must needs be old, established, and obscure. The Classic nations knew no higher aim for the individual than to be merged in the moral circle of the native

land. To exhibit the native spirit in its beauty was the highest aim of the Greek; to exhibit the native spirit in its dignity the highest aim of the Roman. The characteristic feature, on the other hand, of the Germans lies in the power of personal life, in the supremacy of individuality in what we call feeling (*Gemuth*). The Germans lived originally not in communities of villages and towns, but each singly upon his own homestead, according as a well or wood pleased him, as Tacitus says. Each of these homesteads was a world in itself. Within, a strictly moral but affectionate family life prevailed. The Germans had such a veneration for women as the cultivated nations who preceded them were entirely unacquainted with. In woman they beheld what was noble and sacred. The father of the family would take up arms for the rights of his household. The relation of the younger brothers to the elder, to whom the inheritance belonged, was one of much hardship. These younger brothers, however, found in the system of affording escort and protection (*Geleitswesen*) an arena for their powers. According to their personal predilections they chose a protecting lord (*Geleitsherr*), to whom they devoted themselves with the most absolute fidelity, receiving in return favour and protection. When Christianity reached the Germans, Jesus appeared to them in the character of such a protector, His disciples as his heroes and champions. It was in this system of protection that the activity, the love of adventure, the far-reaching mind of the Germans found an outlet. This rela-

tion between the protecting lord and his associates corresponded to that between the king and his feudatories in the Germanic states. It was an entirely personal one. As the kings personally loved their vassals, so did the vassals personally love their kings. In the east the king was the absolute autocrat who was feared, in the classic lands the representative of law who was honoured; but in the German lands the personal head of the nation who was loved with German fidelity. The German, too, looked upon nature in the same personal manner. In his eyes she was not as in those of Oriental, the gigantic incorporation of the spirit of the universe; nor as in those of Greek, a wisely and beautifully arranged piece of mechanism, a kosmos in which lovely and divine forms prevail, but a mirror of heart and mind. The massive and destructive forces of nature—the winter, the storm, the lofty mountain—were changed by the German mind into giants; the organic and organizing powers of nature into elves, who were so dear to the Germans that they cannot relate without sorrow how these silent little creatures departed at the sound of the bell, and youthful acolytes one day announced to a nixey, named Strömkarl, that he too had a Redeemer. In Thor, the god of thunder, with his red beard and his thunder hammer grasped in his hand, waging perpetual warfare with the giants, the Germans saw the expression of their adventurous chivalry; in Odin, or Wustan, the god of battles, the expression of the wild desire which led them to the fight. But a sad prediction of

ruin runs through the whole of their mythology. Each setting sun, each fading flower and fruit, foretells the waning glory of the gods. When Heimdallr, the bright God of dawn, shall announce, by the blast of the gjellarhorn, that the monsters are going forth to fight with the giants, the gods will depart from the Walhalla in their last warlike splendour, to meet their own deaths in mortal contest with their enemies.

The German character was childlike and simple, yet at the same time it concealed a world of future capability; hence it was, on the one hand, full of lofty endeavour; on the other, full of unsatisfied longings, and inclined to melancholy. It was this trait of melancholy which offered a soil to Christianity. The conversion of the Germanic nations was not the work of a fortunate moment. It was a thousand years before Germany was thoroughly penetrated by Christianity. The Scandinavian north was converted about the year 1000. The powerful emperors of the Saxon dynasty especially, held it to be their duty to undertake the work of conversion among the Scandinavian as well as among the Sclavonic tribes. It has been already remarked that the Sclaves in Germany had penetrated as far as the Elbe and the Saal. For the purpose of converting them, missionary bishoprics were founded in Magdeburg, Havelburg, Brandenburg, Merseburg, Meissen, &c. We need not, however, form an idea of much heart-work in these conversions. Bishop Boso, of Merseburg, for instance, insisted that the Sclaves of his neighbourhood should sing the

Kyrie Eleison. Since, however, they did not know what this meant, they sang *Ucrivolsa, i.e.*, the Erl-king stays in the wood. In the church of Thossen, at Plaven, the warlike St. Martin is painted above the altar, with the superscription, "Martin our, and your Thor." Thus the heathen of this locality were taught that they would find their ancient god Thor again in this warrior saint. The Sclavonic tribes are undoubtedly the most nearly related to the Germanic. They are, as Leo says, members of the same family, each possessing his distinct peculiarity. In both, feeling (*Gemuth*) predominates, but this, among the Germans, becomes a free, independent, self-developing personality; while among the Sclaves it has more the character of receptivity for what the outer world offers, of childlike submission to the powers by which life is governed, of quiet industry and enduring perseverance, of clear perception for what is near at hand.

Let us now observe somewhat more closely that Christianity which the missionaries of the faith brought to the German and Sclavonic tribes. The Church taught the existence of the Triune God, surrounded in heaven by a hierarchy of saints and angels. He who once became man, that he might be a sacrifice for our sins, is present in every mass under the form of bread and wine, in order to offer himself again in an unbloody manner for sinful man. The fires of purgatory await those who have not sufficiently obeyed upon earth the laws of the Church. The powers of heaven are everywhere manifested in miracles, which corre-

spond with the German love for the mysterious. In pictures the heavenly prototypes look down upon men, in relics the healing powers of the saints still reside. What a mysterious awe was felt by the Germans who once sacrificed in the obscurity of their forests, in the mysterious shadows of those forests of stone columns whose over-arching roof stretched towards heaven! Within, was heard the summons of the bell, the tongue of the church, pronouncing a heavenly consecration of every turning point of life. The fact that Schiller, during the period of the Church's decay, could connect every incident of life with the bell, proves how entirely the Church had fraternized with popular life even in outward things. There, too, the organ, the voice of nature to God's praise, awoke in the heart the awe of eternity. The cycle of Christian festivals also set its marks deeply upon social life. How dear to the German, in the dark, cold winter, did bright Christmas become, at which so many an ancient custom received the sanction of Christianity, and even the ancient gods, especially Frau Bertha, were allowed to appear; and Easter, named after Ostara, the goddess of spring, when the seriousness of the long feudless fast gave way to joy in the risen Saviour; and May-crowned Whitsuntide, when the vassals were wont to assemble around their lord for the festal procession in the church, as when on one such occasion Siegfried saw Chriemhilde.

The Germans saw in Mary the perfect type of woman, whom they honoured in life, and the mother

of God possessing a motherly heart for all believers in His Son. Their martial temperament rejoiced in the warrior archangel Michael, and the chivalrous saints Martin and George. The school went hand in hand with the church. All the culture of the times was inherited from the ancient classic ages. The Church too which was herself nourished by ancient traditions, preserved also the culture of the old world. By bringing the Bible to the Germanic races she obliged them to write their language, that they might be able therein to read the word of God. Translations of the whole and of individual parts, poetical paraphrases of sacred history, such as the Heliand and the Krist, formularies of faith, prayers, homilies, are among the oldest monuments of German literature. The classic languages were already too formed to give much scope to the influence of Christianity, The forms of the German language, on the contrary, which were still in process of formation, were susceptible in a far higher degree, of the influence of Christianity. The Church introduced the cloister. It is impossible to speak of western civilization without remembering those monastic schools which were the most learned institutions of the time. Charlemagne, who looked upon the Church as the great institute for the education and refinement of his people, assembled about him the most gifted personages of the age, that he might, by their means, diffuse education on all sides. The era of Charlemagne, which stands out like a point of light in the midst of these dark times, proves what

one great mind may do for the enlightenment of an age. And hence certain dogmas which had not been settled in the ancient church, became at this period subjects of lively discussion; these were, however, determined not according to the progress of opinion, but by the authority of the fathers. The ancient church had cherished various views concerning the Lord's supper, which had their point of union in the belief that the bread and wine, after consecration, are the body and blood of Christ. When then in the Carlovingian period, the monk Paschasius asserted the doctrine that the bread and wine are changed by the words of consecration, the most respected church teachers as yet opposed it. The doctrine of transubstantiation was, however, so much in accordance with the times, that when in the eleventh century Berengarius opposed it, he was obliged to recant his protestation.

As doctrine, worship, and life inclined to festivals, to externals, to all that might strike the senses, so also did the constitution of the Church take a more secular form. The nobles richly endowed the bishops and abbots with property and privileges. That which induced them to such a course of action was first a love for the Church, but the assistance they derived from the superior intelligence of the clergy, and the counterpoise formed by the ecclesiastical to the secular vassals were also powerful motives. In the empire of Charlemagne the bishops in the church answered to the counts of the empire. As the counts marched from place to place to administer

justice in combination with the magistrates, so had the bishops also their synodal judicatures, in which together with men of consideration in the eyes of the church, they sat in judgment upon ecclesiastical crimes, and imposed ecclesiastical punishments upon the guilty. The emperors of the Saxon dynasty endowed the bishops and abbots with the privileges of counts. According to German custom the feudal relation in which the bishops and abbots stood to the princes, was ratified by a solemn transaction in which the ecclesiastics took the oath of fidelity, and received in return from their feudal lord a ring and staff. The natural result of this feudal relation was the dependence of the church upon the feudal lords. The lords were allowed also to choose the bishops, who were to be their feudatories. In this choice, however, they not merely suffered themselves to be guided by worldly views, but even sold spiritual offices, a crime called simony after Simon Magus, who is said, in the Acts, to have desired to purchase from St. Peter the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is easy to conceive that bishops and abbots thus chosen, belonging for the most part to the nobility, and endowed in a princely manner, led a very worldly life, engaged in hunting, feuds, tournaments, adventures, warlike expeditions, &c. Often as the emperors reminded them that it was not seemly that ecclesiastics should perform military service, they did not cease to take upon them to follow their lord's banner to the field. *Der grosse Rosengarten,* a mediæval poem, very

amusingly describes how the heroes who went to the tournament of Chriemhilde, took with them the monk Ilsan, who wielded a mighty blade, and at last acknowledged that the warlike spirit of his race, the ancient Wulfingen, was still in him, and could no longer be restrained. The theological attainments of most of these ecclesiastics cannot be too meanly esteemed. Charlemagne wished the clergy to preach. To make their own sermons, was not, indeed, required of them. He only desired to have them capable of reading the sermons of the fathers which he had collected. Not a few, however, read out the Latin words of the Mass without understanding them. It sometimes happened that they could not even correctly pronounce in Latin the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. One clergyman baptized with the word *patrua* instead of *patris*. Of another we hear that he did not know whether he was ordained or not. From the fourth century it was the law of the western church that the clergy should be unmarried. Several, however, actually lived in the state of matrimony. This was especially the case in Germany. Such illegal marriages, however, deprived the clergy of all moral influence over their flocks. In short, the consequence of the church's rich endowment with worldly possessions, privileges, and honours, was its secularization and dependence upon the state. Reform had become indispensably necessary. The efforts, however, made by the popes for reform, efforts which involved the positive aim of rendering the church independent of

the state, provoked a long conflict, which forms a fresh epoch of the mediæval church.

The second period of the mediœval church, viz., that from 1050 to 1250, forms the table-land of the middle ages. There were, according to the opinions of the age, two powers upon earth, the spiritual wielded by the pope, and the temporal by the emperor. These two powers had under Charlemagne entered into close combination. When, at the Christmas mass of the year 800, he stood near the high altar of St. Peter's at Rome, it was pope Leo III., who, amidst the rejoicings of the people, placed the imperial crown upon his brow. Certainly the pope had no imperial crown to bestow. Nay, the imperial dignity itself was but an ideal and imaginary possession. Charlemagne, who, as chief of the Germanic nations, was actually standing upon the ruins of the Roman empire, now entered under the consecration of the church into the inheritance of the western emperors. The imperial dignity involved the supremacy over all the western nations, and the duty of protecting the church. Charlemagne was the ideal of such an emperor. And the church canonized him. With the high-minded King Otho, of the Saxon dynasty, who may well be compared with Charlemagne, the imperial dignity devolved upon the German kingdom, which was henceforth called, the holy Roman empire of the German nation. The church canonized not him but his wife Adelheid. In the tenth century, which has received the surname

of the dark or the leaden, all the noble powers of the times gathered around the Saxon emperors, and with a powerful hand attacked the abominations, then hereditary in the Roman See. And in their spirit it was that Henry III., one of the emperors of this dynasty, proceeded to depose three popes at the synod of Sutri.

An entire revolution, originating with Hildebrand, now took place. This man imposed upon the Romish See the gigantic task of making the church, with its whole circle of secular powers and privileges, and rich endowment of fiefs, not only independent of the state, but also a power exercising supremacy over it. What was fitting to God the Lord of the world, was fitting to the Church, his kingdom on earth, viz., the government of the world. As the spirit rules the body, so should also the spiritual kingdom, the church, rule the bodily kingdom, the state. The spiritual power is related to the secular, as the sun to the moon, whose light, indeed, is held in fief from the sun. God, however, governs the Church, as the Church does the world through the successors of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles. The Church must first of all be freed from the yoke of the state. There are two things which make the ecclesiastics the vassals of the state, their appointment by the laity or *Lay investiture*, which is infected with simony, and *the marriage of priests*, which is illegal, combined with much immorality, and makes the clergy dependent upon worldly circum-

stances. Hildebrand then, having, during the popedoms of three successive popes, who were entirely under his guidance, laid a firm foundation, by depriving the emperors of the power of choosing the popes and placing this election in the hands of the cardinals, the chief clergy of Rome, and by obtaining protection for the Roman See from the Normans and in Lower Italy, which was a papal fief, pronounced sentence of excommunication against such ecclesiastics as had received lay-investiture, or were living in matrimony. The excommunication thus fulminated kindled a wide-spread conflagration. At the head of the opposition was Henry, afterwards Henry IV. He declared Gregory VII. deposed. But Gregory answered not merely by excommunicating Henry in the name of the prince of the apostles, but by taking the unprecedented step of absolving Henry's subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Then began a long contest between Henry and Gregory. But the combatants were unequally matched. On one side was a prince utterly wanting in self-control, and beset on all sides; on the other, a pope uniting with the wisdom of a statesman the most unbending strength of will, and supported by the popular faith in the power of the church. Henry perceiving that nothing but absolution could secure him the imperial crown, resolved after remaining during three cold January days bare-foot and in penitential garb, in the fortress of Canassa, to obtain pardon from the pope by disgraceful concessions. Yet even this tremendous sacrifice

was in vain. Henry, indeed, subsequently reduced Gregory to extremities. But succoured by the Normans, he died with these words on his lips: I have hated iniquity and loved righteousness, and therefore I die in exile, while Henry, broken-hearted at the conduct of his son, whom the See of Rome had excited against his father, died under the papal ban and was forbidden Christian burial. The popes, and among them those remarkable personages Alexander III. and Innocent III., steadily and securely pursued the course which Gregory had laid down for them. They saw in the Roman See the power destined to represent God upon earth, and to rule the bodies as well as the souls of men, to reign over the state as well as the church, people as well as princes, towns as well as knights, art as well as science. In fact, during the period which forms the culminating point of the middle ages, the Church was the supreme authority to which all others were subordinate. Evidence to this fact is furnished in the very highest degree by *the Crusades.*

For two centuries did the princes of the West go forth to rescue the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels. To this enterprise they were impelled by a spirit partly ecclesiastical, partly romantic. An age craving for visible manifestations of the heavenly, had a natural drawing towards the Holy Land, the great relic of the East. And by what good work could it better hope to deserve eternal life than by a warlike pilgrimage in the service of the Church?

The German love of the mysterious, the adventure loving instincts of the German tribes, the chivalric love of brilliant deeds of arms, the poetic soarings of imaginative youth after the ideal, found moreover their most abundant nourishment in the blue atmosphere of the mysterious East. But in vain did the West offer its tremendous sacrifice of nearly nine million lives for the holy sepulchre. The God of history answered the countless pilgrims who sought the Lord at his grave: Why seek ye the living among the dead, He is not here, He is risen!—The true consecration of the knight was the brave joy with which he every moment risked his life for those ideal possessions, faith, love, and honour. The chief elements of town life, on the other hand, were the intelligent and industrial application of the products of the earth to the interests of society, the virtues of domestic life, of social respectability, of corporate association, of wise and cautious devotion to the common good. The popes who, in the Crusades, directed the chivalrous spirit of the age to an ecclesiastical purpose, also extended their protection to the rising freedom of the towns, especially in Northern Italy, because they hoped to find it a counteracting power to the chivalric dominion of the Hohenstaufens.

The Hohenstaufens, the noblest scions of the chivalric spirit of the age, full of character, bold, highly endowed and romantic, looked upon the imperial crown as a fief held immediately from God,

in which the strength of Germany and the beauty of Italy were united. Their struggles for absolute power brought them into collision with their vassals, at whose head was the house of Welf; their arrogant and chivalrous spirit armed against them the towns of Northern Italy, while their principle that the empire was a fief held of God and not of the See of Rome, brought them into conflict with the popes. The whole period is marked by the contentions of Guelphs and Ghibellines. These party names designate principles. The Ghibellines desired a strong imperial government upon chivalric principles, occupying a more or less free position with respect to the hierarchy. The Guelphs desired a strong papacy combining with the towns and vassals against the Hohenstaufens. In this contest the church was victorious, Conradin, the last Hohenstaufen, being vanquished by the papal vassal-king, Charles of Anjou.

But the mediæval church not only enlisted in its service princes and people, knights and towns, but also *science.*

The fathers, the Church teachers of the first six centuries, laid the foundations of Church doctrine. The transition period from 600 to 1050, lived upon the traditions of the patristic age, and was ruled by the so-called *schoolmen,* who set before themselves the task of systematizing and explaining the doctrinal material furnished by the fathers, the absolute truth of which was taken for granted. With them it was an established principle, that Scripture

and Church doctrine were entirely consistent. Among Church doctrines, however, they comprised not only the dogmatic decisions of the fathers concerning the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the grace of the Holy Ghost, &c., but also those which had not arisen till the middle ages, such as that of the seven sacraments. Ages in which doctrines are undisputed are ever inclined to devote their labour to bestowing upon them a formal completeness. The schoolmen threw all their strength into the comprehensive definition, the sharp distinction, the exhaustive carrying out, the systematic connection of doctrines. While the schoolmen of the twelfth century more pursued that formal completion of single doctrines called Sentences, the schoolmen of the thirteenth, produced those gigantic systems called *Summa* which still excite our astonishment. As the Church was the all-governing power, theologians also undertook to cause all science, by the help of Aristotle, to find its beginning, middle, and end in God. *Albertus Magnus* taught at Cologne not only theology and philosophy, but prosecuted his investigations into the mysteries of nature in such a manner as made him appear in the eyes of his contemporaries a sorcerer, who might perhaps in the middle of winter lead a king into a spring garden. One of his disciples was a youth of a noble Italian family, of so silent and unlikely a character, that his fellow students had given him the nickname of the silent ox. Albertus, who knew his talents, once gave him an opportunity of display-

ing his powers in a discussion, saying afterwards: this dumb ox will give forth such a roar that the whole globe will echo with it. The youth was afterwards known as *Thomas Aquinas*, the great schoolman.

In scholasticism we may discern a more comprehensible and a more mystic tendency. And this distinction corresponds with the two monastic orders of Franciscans and Dominicans, which arose about the beginning of the thirteenth century. The monasteries, originally places of retirement for those who desired to renounce the world, whether we regard them as proprietors of rich estates, as the bright centres from which science and refinement were diffused, as seminaries of the clergy, or as missionary stations, play an important part both in the ecclesiastical and secular life of the middle ages. The Franciscans and Dominicans imposed upon themselves the task of wandering through the world in utter poverty, that by their example, their preaching, and their personal influence, they might gain the world for the Church. The Franciscans especially, were, after the example of St. Francis of Assisi, the men of poverty, of mystic communion with God, of personal union, while the special province of the Dominicans was the maintenance of orthodoxy, and subsequently the Inquisition. Mediæval humanity while it acknowledged indeed the claims of the purely human, yet found a higher kind of life in monasticism. Every family regarded it as an honour to have one, at least, of its members devote

himself to the cloister. Whoever by bitter experience had felt the nothingness of earthly things would rush as it were into the arms of God by entering a cloister. Only those men or women, however, whose renunciation of the world obtained the heavenly consecration of miracles, received canonization. St. Elizabeth will remain a saint in the estimation of every age. But what made her such in the eyes of her contemporaries were doubtful miracles, a morbid state of mind, self-imposed inflictions, and unscriptural adorations. What makes her admirable in ours is the heavenly abundance of insatiable love to God and the poorer brethren, contained in a vessel around which were blossoming the choicest flowers of mediæval life, the Wartburg, the Minnesong, romantic love, the crusades, and Gothic art. The Church of St. Elizabeth, which was raised over her grave is the oldest, simplest, and most beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture in Germany.

Gothic cathedrals form the most characteristic image of herself which the mediæval church has bequeathed to us. A Gothic cathedral may be said to represent the whole world transfigured into the kingdom of God. Its pillars soar heavenwards like trees, o'erarched by a canopy through which the stars are shining down. Nature is expressed by symbolical plants, such as roses, grapes, palms; by symbolical animals, such as the lion, the cock, the phœnix. Even the forms of the ancient mythology were pressed into the Church's service. The spirit of secular

history appears in the tombs of princes, in swords and banners. Ecclesiastical history meets us in the prophets, apostles, fathers, and saints. The floor covers the kingdom of the dead. Heaven and earth, plants and animals, secular and ecclesiastical history, the living and the dead form a wondrous whole, whose towering loftiness set forth Heaven as the aim for the soaring spirit of the German nation, whose subdued light told the mystery loving German that the earthly light must sink, if the heavenly light were to rise, whose lofty choir with the dazzling splendour of its richly coloured windows, its high altar, its images of saints, shone forth into the nave an image of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The third period of the middle ages, from 1250 to 1517, *i.e.,* from the fall of the Hohenstaufens to the Reformation brings before us the dissolution of mediæval life. A glance at our own past will explain to us that mediæval world which we are now contemplating. Every true German life has its mediæval period, during which it enthusiastically pursues its romantic ideals. But we cannot remember the crusades of our youth without blessing the hand which led us in due time to recognize that he who is ever gazing upwards at his ideal stars, without paying needful attention to that ground of reality which is under his feet, is sure to wander into hollows in which even these stars will be hidden from him. Such, too, was the disposition in which many crusaders returned to the West. They had learned the truth of the

saying, that they who cross the sea change their country but not their mind. They perceived that the Lord must be served, not in the far East, but in that state of life to which he has been pleased to call us. How many knights who came home in ruined circumstances, looked with envy upon the fruits of the trading industry of the towns. After the termination of the crusades, the nations devoted themselves to the perfecting of their political, industrial, artistic, and scientific interests. France was at the head of this movement. Philip the Fair, supported by the estates of his kingdom, treated Boniface VIII., who enounced theories, which better popes in better times would never have ventured upon, with the contempt of a haughty conqueror. Nay, the popes departed from Rome to Avignon, there to dwindle into mere satellites of the French court. In Germany the imperial crown devolved upon the house of Hapsburg. This family regarded it not upon its ideal side as the Hohenstaufens had done, but upon its real one of being a considerable family possession. The choice of an emperor was wrested from the Roman See, and placed in the hands of the electors; the clergy, the knights, the towns, who had been in constant collision, at length found their point of rest in the position of estates of the empire. But Rome could never so well manage nationalities who were pursuing their purely human interests. The Ghibelline principle, which had been repressed under the Hohenstaufens, revived in the nation's conscious-

ness, and found expression in the saying, that Frederick III. the great Hohenstaufen, would take his victorious way westward from the Holy Sepulchre for the purification of the Church. Dante, the Ghibelline, also predicted the fall of Rome, because it wielded two swords with one hand. To the scandal of a papacy at Avignon, dependant upon the French monarchy, was added that of a double series of popes, one at Rome, the other at Avignon, who mutually excommunicated each other. There were besides abuses and abominations of all sorts in the papal government, a great decline in both the intellectual and moral life of the clergy, and unheard of depravity in the cloister. The papacy had not only lost its power, but the scholastic learning of the middle ages had also decayed. Nor was it the papacy alone which was weakened. Ages in which a secularized life and external orthodoxy prevail, are favourable to an internalized (*verinnerten*), a mystical theology. In the middle of the fourteenth century such *mystic tendencies* arose on all sides. The concordant language of these mystic tendencies, which appeared at one time in a speculative, at another in a poetic, at another in an evangelico-practical, form is: in Christianity everything depends not upon the external Church, not upon traditional doctrine, but upon the communion of the individual with God. To the protest of the national spirit, to the protest of mysticism, was at length added the protest of the *universities*. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,

universities after the pattern of the university of Paris were everywhere arising, and occupying a position midway between the Church and the state. On one hand they professed submission to the mediæval Church, while on the other they moved in an element which pointed to testing, to movement, and to liberty. The common demand of these national, mystic, and learned forces, was the reform of the Church. They demanded the abolition of that so-called schism, the double series of popes, the cessation of prevailing abuses, the purification of the Church in its head and members. And this demand involved, in the opinion of the university of Paris, the grand measure of *general ecclesiastical councils.* Such were held in the beginning of the first half of the fifteenth century at Pisa, Constance, and Basel, where, in fact, the chief powers of the age were represented. It is a characteristic fact that at Constance the speaker was John von Gerson, who, as a preacher of the university of Paris, represented the universities, as a theologian the mystics, and as a Frenchman the rights of nationality. But this vast expenditure of power led to no result. The mischief lay too deep for such a remedy.

The mischief consisted in three *fundamental errors.*

First, *the authorities of the Church were occupying a false position.* The three authorities which should decide the doctrines of the Church are: Scripture, tradition, and the progressive self-consciousness of the

Church. As soon as the Church follows tradition only it ossifies. Tradition is the bony framework in the body of the Church. As soon as it follows only its own progressive self-consciousness, it loses its God-laid foundation. The true point of union of its traditional and progressive tendencies is the apostolic word. The apostolic word, as we have already seen, existed at first in a double form; as oral preaching which was deposited in the Church's consciousness, and as the written word. The ancient catholic Church held to the perfect accordance of the written with the delivered word of the apostles. But it cannot be denied that the consciousness of the Church, in which the apostles deposited their oral teaching, was a very fragile medium. If the apostles even in their epistles had to speak against misrepresentations of their teaching, it could not but happen that, in after times also, the consciousness of the Church should add what was human, nay, what was erroneous to the word which had been delivered. If, then, the apostolic word exists under two forms, one of which is stable, the other unstable, it is in the nature of things that when the two differ, the stable form, *i.e.*, Scripture, must decide. What, then, in the middle ages was meant by tradition, was in fact the sum of all which, during the course of the Church's history, had obtained permanent estimation. Part of this, however, was of very modern origin, neither Scripture nor the ancient church, *e.g.*, knew anything of a change of the elements in the Lord's Supper, in

the strict sense of the words. When Paschasius enounced this doctrine in the ninth century, it appeared to the most renowned among the church's teachers, a novelty, and therefore opposed to tradition. In the eleventh century, however, it had already become tradition, *i.e.*, an established doctrine with the appearance of antiquity. The whole notion of tradition had indeed been changed. Originally the teaching of the apostles, propagated in the church from mouth to mouth, it had gradually assimilated whatever was openly esteemed valid. The schoolmen lived in the persuasion that the received faith of the mediæval church corresponded with the apostolic word. But scholastic means of proof were gradually less and less esteemed, and the more vigorous and deeper intellects turned to the Scriptures.

Hitherto the Scriptures had been essentially the concern of theologians. A copy of the Scriptures was itself a possession. They were generally read not in the originals, but in the Latin translation of the western Church, the so-called Vulgate. Translations into the languages of the different countries were indeed in existence, but they were little circulated and defective. But the invention of printing furnished an unanticipated means for a greatly increased circulation of the Scriptures. Classical studies, too, opened up new paths for the interpretation of the Scriptures. An extraordinary intellectual activity manifested itself on all hands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The external forms of the

mediæval church still endured; but new forces, big with the future, were everywhere working and moving. A spirit of investigation, an effort to trace things to their sources, a clear unprejudiced eye for reality, seized upon the classical studies for the sake of the light they shed both upon science and life. Classical scholars were zealous against scholasticism, exposed to ridicule monastic life, pilgrimages, and the adoration of relics, &c., and appealed from the defective translation of the Church to the original Greek and Hebrew texts which they enabled their contemporaries to understand. *Reuchlin* opened to his age the knowledge of the Old, and Erasmus that of the New Testament Scriptures.

They who have an eye for the signs of the times must acknowledge that everything was now combining to direct attention to the Scriptures, towards which during the middle ages isolated movements had been tending with all their power.

Since the close of the twelfth century, the *Waldenses* had maintained the right of the laity to preach the gospel on the ground of their general priesthood. Having thus come into collision with the dominant church, they protested against much which they were unable to reconcile with Scripture. In the fourteenth century *Wickliffe* entered the lists upon Scripture grounds against the unscriptural doctrines of the schoolmen, the alienated state of the Church, and especially against the conduct of the mendicant friars, by appealing to the people in sermons and catechetical

writings. In the fifteenth century the zeal of the Bohemian reformers against immorality and worldliness, found its strongest expression in *Huss*, who devoted himself to the instruction of the people in the gospel in their own tongue. He, however, less opposed the doctrine than condemned the practice of the ruling church. The council of Constance, which was assembled for the sake of reforming the Church in its head and members, so little understood the pure gospel that it sentenced these faithful witnesses to the flames. *Savonarola*, too, who testified with prophetic zeal against the worldliness of the clergy, ended his days at the galleys. All these reformers sealed their testimony to the gospel with the cross of Christ, which they took up in the joyful persuasion that its cause, though now trodden under foot with sanguinary ferocity, would yet burst forth again triumphantly.

Wickliffe had predicted a time in which teachers enlightened by God would build up the church as Paul had done. Huss was not indeed the author of the well-known proverb of the goose and the swan, but he did say that what the enemies of the gospel could do to him, a tame goose (such was the meaning of his name in the Bohemian dialect) they would not be able to do to those more soaring birds who would succeed him. Savonarola foresaw first death, then victory. Thus did both the signs of the times and the witnesses of the gospel point to the Scripture.

The second fundamental error of the mediæval

Church was an incorrect position with respect to salvation. The ancient Church had in the East made the essence of Christianity to consist in renovation of life; in the West, in doctrine. The middle ages, however, found the centre of gravity of Christianity in the Church. Only they who were lawful members of the external organism, the church, could enter into eternal life. It was necessary to salvation to admit the truth of all the dogmas of the Church, to observe its laws, to use diligently all the means of salvation prescribed by the priests to individuals, to subserve the Church's aims, and to die under her benediction. In short, they alone could obtain salvation who were faithful vassals of the external church. While the external church was thus interposing itself and its legal ordinances between Christ and the individual, man was not justified by faith in Christ alone, but by faith and the legal works which the Church imposed upon him. And what was this but a manifest relapse into Judaism? The Church had become a legally ordered divine authority, which did not suffer the individual man to become the immediate child of God through faith in Christ, but degraded him into a servile instrument of her forms and aims. When then, about the middle of the thirteenth century, the external forms of the Church organism were more and more dissolved, all those who thought and felt deeply took refuge in mysticism, which told men that salvation lay not in membership in the external church, but in living communion with

God. And to this were all protestant movements tending. The Waldenses, Wickliffe, Huss, Savonarola all concur in saying to the individual: Seek first thy soul's salvation, and find it in a lively faith in Christ. The result which the middle ages delivered to modern times was this: The essence of Christianity consists in personal communion with God through Christ.

The third fundamental error of the mediæval Church consisted in the anti-evangelic spirit which had crept into it. This spirit was both Judaic and heathenish. It was objectively Judaic in the hierarchical form of the Church, which with its high priest at Rome, its priests who gave themselves out as mediators, its times and places regarded as holy in themselves, its sacrifice upon the altar, had become an Old Testament theocracy; subjectively so in the legality and formality which everywhere prevailed. It was heathenish in the creature worship which prevailed in the adoration of the Virgin, saints and relics, in the exaltation of ecclesiastical dogmas and ordinances to revelations of the Holy Spirit, and in the adoration of the Pope as the vicegerent of Christ.

During the time of the residence at Avignon and of the schism, the Papacy had fallen very low. The general councils made a certain degree of earnestness necessary. But the diplomatic dexterity with which Rome knew how to defeat the demands of the people could not fail still more to prejudice public

opinion against the Papacy. A succession of Popes then followed whose depravity reached to a truly anti-Christian depth. Alexander VI. met a deserved death by taking poison which he had intended for one of the cardinals. A contemporary, speaking of him, says: He was a black snake, who would have poisoned the whole world. Julius II. was a good soldier but a bad Pope. Leo X. possessed the refinement but also the worldliness of the house of Medici.

This decline of the Church could not but seem the more crying in proportion to the vigour of the forces which were working on all sides. But the reforming spirits who were bearing testimony against the heathenism in the Church, saw the essence of the Church not in its outward appearance, but in its invisible foundation.

The three fundamental errors of the Mediæval Church point to three principles; first to the principle of the authority of Scripture, secondly to that of personal communion with God through Christ, thirdly to that of an invisible Church. And these are the three principles of Protestantism with which the Modern Church commences in the period of the Reformation.

LECTURE III.

THE MODERN CHURCH.

All who are capable of forming a judgment on history in general, cannot but unanimously declare that the result of the Middle Ages was a demand for reformation. We have seen, however, that the Mediæval Church was tending towards it in two separate currents; on the one hand in that of secular and ecclesiastical progress which, although since the middle of the thirteenth century, it had alienated from Rome one vital power after another, yet demanded by its mightiest energies, by the spirit of nationality, by the prevailing mysticism, by the universities, by classical studies, a renovation of the Church's life; on the other, in a series of witnesses to Gospel truth, such as the Waldenses, Wickliff, Huss, &c., who were striving for the purification and reformation of the Church through the gospel. So long as these two currents pursued their separate courses, they were incapable of effecting a reformation. Secular and ecclesiastical progress might indeed prepare the soil, but could not produce reforma-

tion itself. The witnesses to truth, on the other hand, were still too isolated to be able to carry out their purpose, the gospel was wanting to the progress of the age, the progress of the age to the gospel witnesses. In the sixteenth century both currents found their common bed in the *Reformation*. That law of historical development, whether sacred or profane, the incarnation of great movements in great personages, was especially exemplified in the Reformation. The person of the Reformation was *Luther*.

Luther was born of a Thuringian peasant family, in which the peculiarly good common sense of the German peasantry was native and hereditary. His youth was passed under the pressure of poverty and the severity of mediæval education. His father's strictness was so excessive as often to excite a feeling of bitterness in the boy's mind. His mother once beat him till the blood flowed, on account of a nut. And the schoolmaster, to whose care he was entrusted, chastised him fifteen times during the course of a single morning. The natural fruit of so strict an education was a faith which saw in Christ only the Judge of the world. At the schools of Magdeburg and Eisenach, Luther prosecuted his classical studies with the greatest zeal. The university of Erfurt, to which he then removed, was one of the most flourishing seats of this kind of learning. Here Luther devoted himself, with that energy with which he pursued whatever he undertook, to the study of mediæval scholasticism. As early

as 1505, being then in his 22d year, he became master of philosophy. It was about this time that an event, of which we have no very clear account, but which is generally represented as either the murder of a friend, or his death by a stroke of lightning, awoke within him his former terror of the world's Judge, and in mediæval fashion he threw himself into the arms of God by entering a monastery, that of the Augustine Eremites. Here he subjected himself with such devotion to the monastic prescriptions of prayer and fasting as almost to destroy himself. Seized with a terror of God, and working out his salvation with fear and trembling, he could find no peace. The mediæval church, with its legal forms, could only crush but not heal his soul, could make him a slave but not a child of God. It was after a long and painful conflict in his cell that the knowledge dawned upon him, that man, who as a sinner before God must be lost, receives that reconciliation which he cannot attain by means of the law, by faith in the merits of Christ. "The just shall live by faith," was the solution of his difficulty. Not that the doctrine of justification by faith was unknown to the church. It was, in fact, the doctrine of St Paul. But even in the ancient church it had been obscured, and its importance underrated. Scholasticism had, after the example of Augustine, understood it to mean, that man is *made* just through that new spiritual life, whose first fruit is faith. But Luther laid hold of it in its evangelical purity. God, who as the righteous

Judge, before whom nothing but His own image can be approved, must condemn sinful man, declares righteous, *i.e.*, absolves from guilt and sin, him who, conscious of his inability to stand before God, lays hold by faith on what Christ has done for him. And not only did he comprehend this doctrine in its purity, but also in its central importance. He perceived the central point of Christianity to consist, not in the external church and its means of grace, but in the fact that the individual man finds his soul's salvation in the communion of faith with God, through Christ. And this faith was, from this time forth, the rock on which his soul reposed. In the consciousness that God was for him, lay that bold courage with which he disregarded all beside Him, that heroic defiance with which he confronted all the powers of hell. By this faith, though as yet unconscious of any opposition to the mediæval church, he was already taking his stand within a new world. Meantime, he also felt the force of those movements which, as we have seen, were tending towards reformation. Luther had a heart for the rights of his fellow-countrymen against the power which the Italians had assumed in the church. In his inward struggles after vital heart-communion with God, he had entered into the spirit of mediæval mysticism, especially into that of Bernhard, of Clairvaulx, of Tauler, and of German theology. The spirit, too, of theological science found its representative in the Professor of the Wittemberg University, who had from the first cherished the more liberal elements of

the times. And, finally, he had applied the results of his classical studies to the elucidation of Holy Scripture, in a manner extraordinary for that age.

Thus the energies, whether of ecclesiastical or secular historical progress, the spirit of nationality, mysticism, were all represented in the man who took his stand upon the everlasting gospel of salvation through Christ, in the greatest of the witnesses to evangelical truth. But that which awakened his dominant opposition to the mediæval church, was the doctrine of indulgence, which offered forgiveness of sins for money. Yet it was not against indulgences, but against their abuse, that he came forward with his ninety-five theses, which on the 31st Oct., 1517, he nailed to the door of the Castle church of Wittenburg. That the theses of a disputation should have produced such immense results must be attributed not to themselves, but to the Spirit of God alone, who bestowed upon them a force greater than their own, and to the inflammable soil upon which they fell, which waited but for a word to burst into a flame. The opponents whom these theses called forth could but further Luther's cause. The Pope, instructed by the Dominicans, thought himself obliged to commission one Cardinal Cajetan, well versed in scholastic theology, to correct the errors of the German Professor. But this dull man, up in scholasticism, but up to nothing besides, of whom Luther said that he was as fit for arguing as an ass would be for playing on the harp, soon acknowledged: I can no longer dispute with this

animal, for he has deep sight and strange notions in his head. More successful was the Pope's chamberlain Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman, who obtained from Luther a promise to let the matter die, and the affair seemed settled had it not been rekindled by Eck.

Eck was one of those theologians who being carnally secure in received dogmas, have no other interest than that of appearing by means of technical forms in the light of defenders of the church. He was a theological gladiator, who had passed from university to university to deck himself with the spoils of those whom he had vanquished. He had, in the first instance, challenged Carlstadt, but was really desirous of trying his strength with the University of Wittenburg in general, and with Luther in particular. The Wittenburg theologians arrived in waggons, escorted by two hundred students, armed with swords and halberts. The disputation was held at the Pleissenburg. The *cantor* of St Thomas began with sacred music. Citizens of Leipsic formed the guard of honour. Two pulpits stood opposite to each other. Eck first disputed with Carlstadt, and evidently had the advantage. Of valiant appearance and stentorian voice, never perplexed, a master of all the arts of controversy, he created a very different impression from the short, slight, and swarthy Carlstadt, who, though continually turning over his papers, and long in deliberating, was yet driven by his adversary to damaging admissions. The Leipsic scholars were so wearied by his tedious-

ness, that they usually fell asleep and had to be wakened by those Leipsic citizens just mentioned, and reminded that it was dinner time.

Things went on, however, quite differently when Luther and Eck were opposed to each other. In a body almost consumed by inward conflicts, a spirit was energizing whose whole nature, as Ranke well expresses it, breathed with the future. They contended concerning the Romish primacy, whether it were of God or of men. Luther maintained that neither Scripture nor the ancient Church knew anything about successors of St. Peter. Eck's tactics, however, consisted in lowering Luther, by comparing him to Huss, whose name was in especial ill odour at Leipsic, its university having been founded in consequence of the opposition of the Germans to the Bohemian party, and its leader. Luther espoused the cause of Huss. Eck objected that he had been condemned by the general council of Constance. But, said Luther, even a general council may err—a saying of unparalleled audacity in those days. Duke George uttered his imprecation: Plague take it. Eck answered: If, reverend father, you say that a general council may err, you are to me as a heathen man and a publican. This was the climax of the disputation. Luther had reached the point of acknowledging no other authority than Scripture, and having advanced thus far, he now began, by writings of a force and eloquence hitherto unknown in Germany, and especially by his address "To the nobility

of the German nation," to deal heavy and crushing blows against the whole superstructure of the mediæval Church. Eck crossed the Alps in triumph, bringing with him a bull of excommunication against Luther. And now, even in Leipsic, where the university was not on the whole favourable to the reformation, he was scarcely sure of his life. He, however, publicly and solemnly burnt the papal bull before the Elster gate of Wittenberg.

Luther's cause had now become so increased in importance that the newly-elected emperor, Charles V., could not ignore it at the diet which was convoked at Worms, and summoned Luther, under a promise of safe conduct, to repair thither. Luther, in spite of the warnings of his friends, who predicted that the fate of Huss awaited him, appeared, and to the question whether he would recant, returned the following reply: "If your majesty and your lordships desire a short answer I will give one with neither horns nor teeth, as follows: If I am not convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or of common sense—for I do not believe in councils and popes alone, because it is certain that they have often erred and contradicted each other,—my conscience is so bound that I neither can nor will recant. Here I stand, I can do naught else, God help me, Amen." To the pope's bull the Diet of Worms now added the ban of the empire. Luther, however, was carried off to the Wartburg. This was for himself, glowing as he was with a violent desire for action, and for his cause, which would

have been destroyed by so destructive a proceeding, a providential leading. Till now the cause of the German reformation had been actually vested in his one person. From this time forth it began to separate from this one person, and to become a movement making its own way through the world.

If it be true that the essence of Christianity consists in the communion of the individual soul with God by faith in Christ, and the essence of the German spirit in feeling (*Gemuth*), we must acknowledge that never have the Christian and the German spirit so thoroughly pervaded any one man as Luther. They only who comprehend the nature of both the Christian and the German spirit can understand the splendid contrasts found united in him. Luther was most thoroughly natural, yet filled with a deep knowledge of his sinfulness and a conviction of his impotence. He was a man of the deepest earnestness, yet just when he was in the very crisis of his fate, he would both speak and write in a humorous tone. He was a man who bore in his heart, as none other did, the interests of the kingdom, and served it with a gigantic expenditure of energy, yet he found time to take an interest in everything, in the least, as well as in the greatest, to work at his lathe, to mend his own garments, to play chess, to practise music, to sing, &c. He was a man of bold self-consciousness, as is shewn by his last will, in which he calls himself a man well known in heaven, on earth, and in hell, yet he knew "*Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts gethan Wir sind gar bald*

verloren." (Our power can avail nothing, we are utterly lost!) From head to foot he was full of genius, yet he submitted all his knowledge, will, and affection to the word. He had a heart touched by all the lively affections of humanity, yet a strength of character which pursued with inexorable steadfastness the narrow path of truth.

After the time of the Wartburg captivity (1522), the Reformation developed itself in two lines—the one the line of doctrine, the other that of organisation. We will first consider that of *doctrine.* When Luther bore his testimony at Worms before the emperor, his standpoint lay in the proposition: the Church must be reformed according to the standard of Scripture. We have seen that this maxim was the result of mediæval agitation. The authority of Scripture in matters of faith has ever been the corner-stone of Protestantism. And this corner-stone can never be shaken. But what availed it to have uttered this principle, unless the Scriptures were in every one's hands. Hence Luther undertook, during his sojourn at the Wartburg, the translation of the Bible into German. It is but natural that three centuries of studious labours should have improved our understanding of the sacred text. Yet we can but marvel at what Luther, with the means of his age at his command, was able to effect. The best translations of the present day have been obliged to follow in his steps, and are not to be compared with his work, as far as power and spirit are concerned.

And not only was his translation a great turning-point in the path of the Scriptures through the Christian world; it was also one for the written German language, into which Luther, as Grimm observes, infused for ever a Protestant character. Yet what availed it to have set up Scripture as the supreme authority, as long as it was not definitely known what it taught. We have seen that Luther found the sum of the gospel in the doctrine of justification by faith. This article, he said, must neither be turned from nor yielded, though heaven and earth, or all things temporal, should fall. And upon this article all depends which we either teach or practice against the Pope, the devil, or the world. How all other doctrines are connected with this fundamental truth is shown by *Melancthon* when treating in his so-called *Loci*, of the first doctrine which rests upon the foundation of the Epistle to the Romans. What, then, was the relation of these two articles to the existing Church? The German Reformation, very far from intending a reconstruction of the Church, only desired at this time to purify the existing edifice. But the expression of this necessity proceeded from the supposition that the Church was infallible neither in doctrine, government, nor worship. Is not the Church, then, governed by Christ, and animated by the Holy Ghost? Certainly, answered the German Reformation; but the proper essence of the Church lies not in forms of doctrine, government, or worship, but in the communion of believers in the Holy Ghost. And this is

the third principle of Protestantism, the principle of the Invisible Church. The essence of Protestantism, then, consists in these three principles: first, in the principle of the authority of Scripture in matters of faith; secondly, in that of the sum of the gospel lying in the doctrine of justification through faith; and thirdly, in that of the Invisible Church being the truth of the visible. But principles alone cannot make a Church. The question was what application was to be made of these principles? And this brings us to the second line, that of *organisation*.

When once the principles of the Reformation were expressed, those who accepted them could not, after having done so, simply return to the existing Church. He who was persuaded that the sacrifice of the mass was unscriptural, could no longer participate therein as before. The great peril, then, of an ecclesiastical revolution was imminent. And we find that during the sojourn of Luther at the Wartburg, a violent abolition of all existing forms took place under the authority of Carlstadt. This was brought about by the so-called fanatics, who made not the Scriptures, but a morbidly excited spirituality, under the name of the Holy Spirit, the supreme tribunal of truth. With these religious storms were combined the political storms of the peasants' insurrection. Had Luther, on his return from Worms, hastened back to Wittenberg, he would not have been able to resist a course of events so ruinous to his cause. Hence it was needful that he should learn at the Wartburg

first, to gain an inward victory over the destructive spirits of his heart, that he might be able to carry on the outward contest with the destructive spirits who were demolishing his work. There must be no violent abolition of what was old, but the inward power of the Word must accomplish the work. Such was the sum of the powerful words with which he rebuked the storms. And this means was triumphant. The preachers of purer doctrine were soon surrounded by flocks, who, according to Luther's advice, instituted an evangelical worship in connection with received forms. When the princes declared for the Reformation, national churches of an evangelical character were formed. The organisation of these took upon itself the task of the so-called visitations, and from these visitations arose in 1529 the two catechisms of Luther.

Thus Germany was divided into two camps, into states which remained in the faith they had received, and states which cherished the Reformation. To such a division, however, neither the Emperor nor the nation could remain indifferent. Charles V., having concluded a peace with his adversaries, now seriously turned his attention to the settlement of the religious question. He demanded of the Protestant states a written statement of their position. For this purpose Melancthon drew up, from already existing confessions, the so-called Confession of Augsburg (1530). In this confession the two lines spoken of are combined. Its first part exhibits, in

twenty-one articles, the Protestant doctrines in such a manner as to offer proof that they are in accordance not only with Scripture, but with church doctrine. The second part developes, in seven articles, the principles according to which Protestants are organized, by treating of the several abuses which they had abolished. This confession, which sets forth the doctrines of Luther with the clearness and mildness of Melancthon, and accords both with the gospel and the true tradition of the Church, is itself the ripened fruit of the whole movement, and will ever be the fundamental confession, not merely of Lutheranism, but of all Protestantism.

The diet of Augsburg, at which an emperor, upon whose head the imperial crown actually denoted the first of earthly powers, appeared surrounded by electors, princes, counts, and lords, in long unwonted splendour, seems like the last rays of the departing middle ages. And this confession was set forth by princes who, whatever else they might be as men, were consecrated knights of this noble banner of the faith, John the Steadfast, who, as he said, esteemed it his greatest honour to confess his Saviour, being at their head. Luther remained at a distance in the solitary fortress of Coburg. Being still under the ban of the empire, he durst not appear before the emperor and the diet. But as once Moses had by the uplifted arms of prayer led the battle, so did he from afar give clearness and certainty to his followers. The man who, under the strongest tempta-

tions of soul and body, under the heaviest labours, amidst consuming cares, was accustomed to spend three hours daily in prayer, could yet write humorous epistles and pass hours in observing the jackdaws, of whom he declared that they too were holding a diet to take counsel concerning a war against the oats and barley, and in shooting with Veit Diedrich. To this period belongs the hymn, *Ein fester Burg ist unser Gott,* with its powerful melody, into which Luther has breathed the power of his victorious faith.

The period, extending from the commencement of the Reformation to the Confession of Augsburg, (1517-30), may be called that of *laying the foundation* of the Reformation. It was followed by a period during which the recent movements settled down into confessions, a period when *confessional limits were defined* embracing the half century from the Confession of Augsburg till the appearance of the Form of Concord. (1530-1580.)

Two opposite parties occupied the common ground of the mediæval Church ; the *Romish,* which was for the continuation of the mediæval Church, and the Protestant, which was for the Reformation. On the side of the Romish were the two chief powers of Christendom—the Emperor and the Pope ; its strength lay in the power inherent in that which already exists, its national foundation in the Romish nations. On the side of the Protestant party was secular progress ; its strength lay in the gospel, its popular foundation in the Germanic nations. The

Emperor and Pope were united at Augsburg. As Luther, however, anticipated, this league was not to be of long duration. Charles V. and Francis I., the two heads of the Romish nations, were soon at strife ; and while this lasted, Protestantism could spread without restraint. Religious discussions were held, which led and could lead to nothing. The Electors of Saxony and Hesse, the heads of German Protestantism, combined in an offensive and defensive alliance in its behalf, in the league of Schmalkalde, founded upon the Schmalkalde articles, composed by Luther. This league was in the emperor's eyes so dangerous, on both religious and political grounds, that, being now free from other enemies, he set to work to annihilate it, and in this he was successful. The two leaders of German Protestantism became his prisoners. But God had prepared in Maurice of Saxony, who united to a political tact equal to that of Charles a greater degree both of wisdom and strength, a rod to chastise the wily emperor, and to requite him for his treatment of the Protestants. In 1552, Maurice compelled the emperor to sign the treaty of Passau, which formed the foundation of the religious peace of Augsburg (1555), by which the Protestants remained in possession of all those ecclesiastical rights and possessions which they enjoyed at the time of the treaty of Passau. The emperor, who had lost the prize of his life, abdicated the throne and ended his days in a Spanish monastery. Meanwhile the Pope had convened a general

council at Trent, which lasted, amidst violent interruptions, till 1563. This council, at which the Romish party alone was represented, held only twenty-five sittings in eighteen years, but they were sittings which simply confirmed what had been abundantly discussed in meetings. Their result was the solemn sanction of mediæval, in opposition to Protestant doctrines, against the chief of which the anathema was pronounced. The same act is anything but the same when it proceeds from two different actors. If we cannot but acknowledge that, during the middle ages, the traditional Church, in spite of all its deviations from Scripture, had, as a kind of an old testament disciplinary institution for the youthful Germanic tribes certain rights in its day and generation, it was quite another thing when the Romish party now returned, in conscious opposition to the Scripture testimony of the Reformation, to the maxims of the middle ages.

The most powerful assistance in carrying out the Tridentine decrees was afforded to the see of Rome by the *order of Jesuits*, whose aim it was, by means of a most secret organisation, to make the temporal interests of the various nations a handle for uniting them to Rome. In the various provinces of missionary exertion, of national instruction and education, of the guidance of courts through the influence of confessors, the Jesuits have manifested an activity which is enormous. About the year 1590, the Popish reaction had made very considerable advances.

Rome, supported at first by Spain and afterwards by France, indemnified for her losses in Europe by missions in the East Indies, China, and Japan, represented in her controversies with Protestantism by men of distinguished talent, such as Baronius and Bellarmine, and consecrated even by an after-growth of art in the department of painting by Guido Reni, of music by Palestrina, of poetry by Tasso, was then in a state of vigour. But the spirit of restoration which had swayed the popes since the Reformation, yielded after Urban VIII., who lived during the thirty years' war, to secular interests.

The Protestant party was divided into the two camps of *the German* and *the Swiss* Reformation. Both forms agreed in the principle of the authority of Scripture, in the protest against the unscriptural nature of the mediæval Church, and in the chief doctrines of the faith. But each had, from the very first, its distinguishing peculiarity. Both appealed to Scripture, but with this difference, that in its interpretation and application the German reformation deferred to tradition, the Swiss to reason seeking for illumination. Both saw in *the appropriation of salvation by the individual* the central point of the gospel, but with this difference, that the German reformation, whether in doctrine, constitution, or worship, sought the purification of the existing Church ; the Swiss, the construction of a new edifice. The contrast between the two is expressed in their respective views of the *Lord's Supper*. In the teaching of

Scripture concerning the Lord's Supper is contained that twofold judgment to which the Church has at all times consented: first, that it is a *sacrament;* secondly, that it is a *sacrifice.* It is a sacrament with respect to what God offers to man, viz., the body of Christ; a sacrifice with respect to what man offers to God, viz., the remembrance of Christ's death. Luther, who possessed the German leaning to the mysterious, deferred to tradition, and did not take counsel of reason where scriptural doctrine was concerned, held to the sacrament, by so interpreting the words, "This is my body," as to make the elements the medium of the body and blood of Christ. Zwinglius, who had a stronger leaning to the reasonable and transparent, held to the sacrifice, by seeing in the Lord's Supper nothing but a memorial of Christ's death. A violent strife between the two ensued. The discussion of Marburg, 1529, brought about no accommodation. The Confession of Augsburg, in its 10th article, rejected the Swiss doctrine. Nevertheless, the need of unity was felt on both sides. Since, however, no reconciliation of doctrine resulted, the so-called Wittenburg Concordia (1537) was but a temporary armistice, to be followed by a still deeper division. Luther, at the close of his life, returned to his obdurate opposition to the Swiss doctrine. Meantime a man had appeared at Geneva, in French Switzerland, who had all along been persuaded that both Zwinglius and Luther were but partial in their views of the sacrament. It was *Calvin,* who on the one

side denied with Zwinglius that in, with, and under the elements, the body of Christ was partaken of; yet held, on the other, that believers, who receive in the elements the pledges of the Divine promise, do receive in a mysterious manner the heavenly strengthening of Christ's glorified body. If Luther was of a thoroughly German nature, Calvin was of a thoroughly Roman, nay, one may say, *Romish* character. In him we find nothing of that depth of feeling, that abundant *humanity*, that genial originality, which distinguish Luther. He was of a character that could, with eminent strength of mind, deduce from the Scriptures *settled* doctrines, arrange them into confessions, and reason them out with systematising precision, that could, with the earnestness of a will unswervingly subjected to the will of God, develop and carry out the laws of congregational life. Reason, will, character, consistency, these were the principles of his nature. It was he who gave to the Swiss Reformation, which, after the early deaths of Zwinglius and Œcolampadius, bore within it traces of dissolution, that firmness both of doctrine and constitution which it yet maintains; although his peculiar doctrines of predestination and of the Lord's Supper found but few disciples, in the form at least in which he understood them, and even the constitution which he gave to the Genevan Church has been subject to violent changes.

Luther died on the 18th Feb. 1546, true to his teaching till death. Meantime opposing doctrines

broke out even in the camp of Lutheranism. The principles of the German reformation remained steadfast. But these principles were susceptible of very various application in details. There were two parties in the Lutheran Church—the strictly Lutheran and the Philippic or Melancthonian. The strictly Lutheran party, whose leaders were Flacius, Amsdorf, Wigand, Hesshusius, Chemnitius, &c., which was supported by the Ernestine branch, and had its chief seat in the University of Jena, desired to uphold and carry out, in decided opposition to both the Romish and Reformed parties, the doctrine which Luther had inculcated as that which alone was consistent with Scripture. The Philippic party, on the contrary, supported by the Albertine branch, and having its head-quarters in the University of Wittenberg, persuaded that strictly Lutheran doctrine did in certain points need relaxation, shewed an inclination to overstep the strict boundary lines, whether on the Romish or Reformed side. These opposing tendencies resulted in a series of vexatious controversies which we cannot here particularize. These controversies might perhaps have gone on for some time longer if the overthrow of the Philippic party in electoral Saxony had not given an entirely different turn to the whole movement. The strict Lutheran party was victorious, and the decision of controversies which the so-called Form of Concord laid down, obtained public approval in most Lutheran Churches. The Form of Concord, a col-

lection of evangelico-Lutheran confessions, appeared at Dresden in 1580.

The Western Church had separated into individual Churches widely differing in their confessions of faith. Even the Eastern Church, whose cause was advocated by the Patriarch Cyrillus Lucaris, was affected by the reformation. Hence to this very day the Church is divided into three great parties or confessions, to which belong a number of lesser ecclesiastical parties. The *Eastern* Church, whose political centre of gravity is at present found in Russia, embracing about seventy-six millions of Christians. The *Romish* Church, whose national foundations are the Roman nations of Europe, counting about a hundred and seventy millions. And the two *Protestant* Churches, including, with their sects, about eighty-nine millions. Generally speaking, it may be said, that the Eastern Church lives upon the doctrine of the Ancient Church, that the Romish is the still existing Church of the Middle Ages, and that Protestantism is the Church of the reformation, whose principles are ever tending towards the more complete development of the truths contained in them.

The great intellectual movement of the 16th century having thus settled down into these individual Churches, their energies were, during the 17th century, engaged in the work of dogmatically arranging, and polemically carrying out the fundamental doctrines of their several confessions. The 17th century might be called the Protestant middle ages. A

new scholasticism had arisen, and established traditions were prevailing, whether in the state, the church, the school, or the family. Confessional party spirit at length plunged into the flames of the Thirty Years' War: the names of a Tilly and a Wallenstein on the one side, of a Gustavus Adolphus, Bernhard of Weimar, and the great Elector on the other, awaken great remembrances. But apart from the fearful horrors and unheard of devastations it entailed, the repulsiveness of this war consists in the fact that interests purely political assumed the mask of religion. And the conclusion of this war was in direct opposition to its commencement. The Thirty Years' War ended in indifference not only to all confessions, but to all religion. Religion which, from the commencement of the reformation to the breaking out of this war, had been the first power of the age, now ceased to govern public and general affairs. France, which under Louis XIV. was regarded as the model state, to whose pattern both princes and people sought to conform, was now at the head of European nations. The aim of Louis XIV. was to found, upon the ruins of the other estates of the nation, an absolute monarchy, which, represented by a brilliant court, should assert its superiority abroad by destructive wars, be connected by its commercial policy with the interests of the middle classes, and consecrated by the brilliant intellectual achievements of both science and art. In the age of Louis XIV. we encounter on all sides, whether in the Romish or

Protestant Church, forms destitute of life and spirit; worldliness, and the decay of both moral and religious life. In opposition to an external and ossified orthodoxy *mystic and pietistic movements* everywhere arose, both in the Romish and Protestant communions. These all shared in common the persuasion that Christianity consists neither in doctrine, constitution, nor forms of worship, and hence not in the forms of ecclesiastical life, but in the renewal of the heart. This was acknowledged in the Romish Church by the noble band of *Port Royal*, who sought, in opposition to Jesuitism and the worldliness of the external Church, to revive the religious life of France by the means of St Augustine. This, too, was aimed at in Germany, by means of Scripture, by Spener and Francke, the leaders of so-called Pietism. Undoubtedly this mystic-pietistic movement had a liberating, intensifying, and cherishing influence upon the Church of the period. In Germany the university of Halle (founded 1694) was the chief seat of this movement, which, however, in the second generation was no longer capable of opposing a barrier to the intellectual current which had set in towards illumination. The pietists of Halle, Lange at their head, entertained fears which experience proved to be but too well founded, that the principle of clearness which Wolff was there asserting in the departments of natural philosophy and science, would be prejudicial to their cause. Wolff was no creative spirit, but the man who carried out, and propagated

with great energy and consistency, that fundamental principle of the modern philosophy, that *clearness is the standard of truth*, applying it not only to the sciences, but to mental cultivation in general. When the Pietists succeeded in obtaining from Frederick William the First a decree, by which Wolff was commanded to leave Halle within forty-eight hours, on pain of the halter, their victory was naturally a moral defeat. With the accession of Frederick II. (1740) began the *era of illumination* in Germany. The effort of this era was to effect a transformation of all the traditional forms of life, state and church, school and family, manufactures and agriculture, education and literature, art and science, according to the principle of clearness. Everywhere was the desire rife to replace what was historical by what was in conformity with reason. In the State, the public weal (*le bien public*) was declared to be the supreme law. The leaders of the movement regarded themselves as instruments of the benefits which were to be realized in the state, by the enlightenment of the understanding, the ennoblement of morals, and the increase of material prosperity. As the countryman was directed to employ all his energies in the improvement of husbandry, so was the townsman taught that the future welfare of mankind depended upon the progress of industry. In education, simplicity and nature were made the objects of pursuit, after the model of Rousseau's *Emile*. In schools the useful sciences took the place of classical studies. In the

belles lettres, Nicolai and his associates contended with indefatigable efforts against all that was traditional, mysterious, or deep. In philosophy, common sense was made the supreme arbiter of truth. In theology, the illumination movement assumed the form of *Rationalism; i. e.*, the principle of esteeming that alone to be true which is agreeable to reason. As in all other positive forms of life, only so much as was reasonable was to be esteemed true, the general sway of reason in all systems of polity, the general rights of nature in all codes of legislature; so also in all positive religions, in Judaism, Christianity, Mahometanism, so much of natural or reasonable religion as they contained, was that which alone was true in them. This rational religion arises from the three ideas of God, duty, and immortality. The Rationalists connected this religion of nature and reason with Protestantism, under the supposition that it was the sum and substance of Christianity. All that was supernatural, miraculous, or mysterious, all direct revelation, was expunged from Scripture. Jesus Christ was included in the series of wise men of all ages, with the sole distinction that he was the chief among them. He was looked upon as the founder of the Christian religion, for whose cause God, in a special yet unmiraculous manner, declared himself. They who held to his teaching and followed his example might expect a happy future state, in which virtue would be rewarded.

The spirit of the illumination movement attained

its most daring height in the French revolution. Many of the most noble and exalted characters of the times greeted its commencement with inexpressible joy. But when it soon after proceeded to expose to the unrestrained license of the populace whatever was historical, whether in church or state, in political or domestic life, the eyes of all who could look beyond the surface were opened to the fact, that this sway of reason did but lead to that which was most terribly and directly opposed thereto, to the sway of madness, savagery, and tyranny. *Schiller*, who, as long as he had contended against circumstances, had lent the splendour of his eloquent verse to a liberty which was boldly breaking through all limits, put into the mouth of "the Bell" a recall to a life of traditional ordinances. And even *Goethe*, at the conclusion of his "Hermann and Dorothea," expresses the opinion that it did not become the German to carry on the terrible movement. The deeper the intellectual depths to which German thinkers, since the time of Kant, have attained, the more freely have they acknowledged that superficial thought alone could be satisfied by the reasoning of illumination, while all deep thought would lead to the recognition of the reason which God had deposited in the positive forms of life. In the doctrines of Christianity, with which a shallow illumination had broken a lance, in the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, redemption, &c., thinkers such as *Hegel* and *Schelling* found truth, though they considered them not free

from interpolations. *Schleiermacher*, the greatest of modern theologians, declared, in his discourses to the illuminati of his days, who had departed not merely from Christianity but from religion in general, that religion is no mere summary of abstract ideas, such as God, duty, immortality, but a life directly bestowed upon man, a life whose rights are independent of the dictates of this or that philosophy. And the truths which the profound genius of these great men brought to light, became the conviction of the people in their contest with Napoleon, the heir of the revolution. The fruit of the *war of liberation* was a more lively faith, a deeper moral earnestness, a more profound understanding of the past.

It is an indisputable fact, that since the war of liberation, *a lively faith in Jesus Christ* has again become a power, to whose reality facts which none can dispute bear their testimony. I mention only our missionary institutions, whose yearly revenues equal those of a small kingdom, the efforts of our home mission which seeks by associations for affording them charitable assistance to produce upon the godless masses of our population, that impression which living testimony to Christ makes in the Churches, the copious Christian literature which has sprung up, and especially the great revolution in the province of theology. Every well informed man knows that an intellectual force is not to be computed by mere numbers, but by the demonstration of the Spirit and

of power which accompanies it. And vital Christianity has not been without such demonstration.

Our age is an age of restless agitation, and therefore susceptible of variety of life, both in the past and the present. But wherever there is restlessness there will of necessity be a striving after rest, wherever multiplicity of life, a pursuit of unity. This striving after rest, unity, peace, finds the object of its efforts in Christianity. But not all who strive after Christianity find *true* Christianity. We have seen that during the course of centuries it has passed through many stages of development. They then who seek it in that which appertains to any given period, find the appearance indeed but not the essence. What has ceased to be can not be again set up. It is not merely impossible to revive the ancient or the mediæval Church, but even the days of Protestant orthodoxy are departed for ever. No, this striving after peace, unity, and repose can only find the object of its aim in the *enduring essentials of Christianity.* And this is, according to Scripture, tradition, and the true self-consciousness of the Church, the salvation which man finds in God, through faith in Christ Jesus. He who has found peace for his soul in Jesus Christ, has attained upon this earth that which will make him happy through all eternity. This is the foundation which will endure when heaven and earth pass away. If this be so, and no true theologian will dispute it, then Christianity in its very essence is not merely the revelation of the Word, as the ancient

Eastern Church thought; not merely the new life of grace, as the ancient Western Church taught; not merely the Church, as the Mediæval Church maintained; not merely pure doctrine, as Protestant orthodoxy actually declared, but above and beyond all these it is *life, i.e.*, personal communion with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. He who acknowledges this cannot possibly believe that the kingdom of Jesus Christ is restricted within the limits whether of the Eastern, Romish, Lutheran, or Reformed Churches; he rather confesses one universal Church, running through all the several Churches. True Christian faith is closely connected with a genuine Catholicity. But in saying this we by no means assert that all individual Churches occupy the same position with respect to the gospel.

I live and shall die in the persuasion that the principles of Protestantism are the principles of truth. Let us hold fast that which is eternally true in Protestantism, then may we hope to meet again above, there to contemplate the great acts of God by the light of eternity.

THE CHURCH OF THE PRESENT.

BY

DR. BRÜCKNER.

LECTURE I.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH.

A BROAD sketch of the development of the Christian Church has been laid before you. Its progress through the world's history, from the time of its foundation by its divine and human Head to its attainment of the appearance it presents on the threshold of the present, has been graphically portrayed. My task will be to direct your attention to its actual state, to depict its condition and sufferings, its work and prospects, its duties, and its means of fulfilling them. The internal and external relations of the Church, the manner in which the Christian spirit is exhibited within her, and that in which her conflict with the anti-christian spirit is conducted, the motive powers and immediate aims which consciously or unconsciously determine the peculiar features of her present life, the mutual relations of that life to modern civilization, the discoveries of science, the state of secular politics, and national and social progress, must all be comprised in one general and necessarily contracted picture. An extensive and varied field of view lies before us. Our

aim must be to fix for an instant that which is in a state of ceaseless agitation, of continual flow, and of arduous conflict, skilfully to arrange the lights and shadows, and to supply the appropriate colouring ; and while participating, as we all do, even with respect to church matters, in the movements of the age, to maintain that tranquillity which such a contemplation demands.

The present condition of the church is affected and determined by the present age. It is true that the church possesses, besides her own peculiar province, her own laws of development, and consequently her own history. And these she shares with no other society, by whatever name it may be distinguished. Hence, too, she treads her own path through the world's history, but she does not advance independently thereof. The progress of the church goes on hand in hand with that of the world. She is affected by, and in her turn affects, secular occurrences. No prominent event can occur, no intellectual force appear within the horizon of Christendom, no current of public opinion, no national tendency be developed without its reaction upon the church. She stands in a relation of mutual influence, an influence often hidden, but none the less important, with every floating and sinking interest of the age. And this is an attribute which she has in common with that Christianity of which she is the depository. Christianity is not merely, as it has been called, "an historical great power," but the abiding and central vital force.

Hence, then, whatever happens within the peculiar province of religion, or the church, fails not to leave its impress upon secular history, and this very often, even to its most remote occurrences. Not less true, however, is the converse, that the peculiar stamp of each age is ever impressed upon the condition of the church of that epoch, whether such impress be of a beneficial or prejudicial kind, whether it call forth a welcome or an opposition.

And this is the case in our own times. The general events of the present are essentially modified by the state of the church. Not less is the state of the church essentially determined by the general events of the world. If, then, we would take a survey of the present state of the church, we must try to get a sight of the very heart of the age.

What, then, is the characteristic feature of the age? I think it is this: Europe, and not Europe alone, but mankind throughout the world, is passing through a period of transition, it is labouring at a reorganisation of all relations. The old is dying out, the new is in process of formation, everything is in a state of ferment. Much that exists is already falling into ruins, while as yet we see not that which is to replace it. The greater part of what is in formation appears but in weak attempts and faint outlines. Hence the present is oppressed with a sense of uncertainty and insecurity, which is not the least of the evils of the times.

Something similar, yet still more painful, is found in the church. She, too, is passing through a period

of transition. On the one side, we live in a period of church revival. We are already enjoying the fruits of that movement which came to maturity in the first decade of this century. What this revival consists in has been already pointed out to you. The church has again bethought herself of her everlasting foundation. The historical sense of the age has again taught us to appreciate the old lost treasures of church faith and practice. Church activity has received an unanticipated impulse as, *e.g.*, in the mission field. Church societies have attained an unprecedented expansion. A zone of charitable institutions, manifesting the love which seeks the lost, encompasses the land. Work for the interests of the kingdom of God is more many sided and energetic. The testimony of the church is fuller and purer. A portion of our people show not merely an interest for the faith, but are showing sincerity therein. In short, we are living in an age of church revival.

But, on the other hand, the church has to deal also with powers which have not hitherto attacked her in the same manner as they are now doing. It is true that there is nothing new under the sun. The opposition now rife against the church is no novelty. But the manner in which it is carried on is; if opposition once assumed the mask of philosophy, it now assumes the garb of natural science. If it once stood more on the defensive, it now takes an aggressive attitude. If it was once in an isolated position with respect to public opinion, it is now supported by a

considerable party. The bashfulness of yesterday has given place to the self-possession of to-day. And the conflict in which the church is engaged has thus become the more arduous.

Thus is the Church striving after an internal renovation, but she is at the same time struggling for external position. The concurrence of these two points may, generally speaking, be regarded as constituting the characteristic mark of her present condition. The Church engages in these efforts, divided into various confessions, a division which has now become historical and traditional.

As you have already been reminded of its origin and chief causes, it will be unnecessary for me to dilate upon this topic. It may suffice to recall to your remembrance the fact that the Church has passed from its original unity into a state of separation, and is now striving through separation after final unity, to remind you that no one of the existing confessions comes up to the entire essence of the Church, or presents a summary of all its distinctive marks, while each, in a greater or less degree, exhibits some. Each is *a* church, but none is *the* Church, the only true and Catholic Church. Each has also much that is common to all. Not only does the communion of saints run through them all; there is besides this a common body of Christian doctrine, morals, and worship, in all confessions. This is a fact which should never be lost sight of, and the reason that the consciousness of that which

separates is accompanied by the consciousness of that which unites them.

The former predominates in the relation of Catholicism to Protestantism. There has been no important alteration in this since the times of the Reformation. The antagonism has remained the same. And independently of that obscuration of doctrine which we perceive in the teaching of the Romish Church, it lies chiefly in the circumstance that she proclaims herself the "only true," "the sole proper institute of salvation" (*ordentliche Heilsinstitut*), that she makes the relation of the individual man to the Saviour dependent upon his belonging to her external ecclesiastical constitution, and acknowledges no equally authorised Christianity external to her own communion. It is true that even last year showed the possibility of a certain amount of concurrence between the two churches in works of benevolence. In the hospitals of Schleswig-Holstein, the Sisters of Mercy emulated the deaconesses of Bethany and Kaiserswerth, and the Brethren of Catholic orders the Brethren of the Rough House, in the care of the sick and wounded. But the mutual position of the two churches remains unaltered, and on the whole it is undeniable that the consciousness of the points of difference outweighs that of the points of union.

The reverse of this is the case in the mutual relation of the two Protestant sister churches. It is true that they advocate two different fundamental peculiarities within the sphere of evangelical life, that in

each we find the expression of a differing determination of evangelical consciousness, involving differences of doctrine, worship, and constitution. This circumstance has been accounted for in divers ways. At one time it has been traced to the intellectual peculiarities and various education of the Reformers, or to differences of political, ecclesiastical, and national condition in the countries of the Reformation. At another we are reminded of the different points which the two churches are said to have brought prominently forward in their opposition to the mediæval Church: the Lutheran Church opposition to its sanctimoniousness; the Reformed, to its idolatry. Now we are referred to the different positions the two churches are said to occupy with respect to the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran maintaining that "what is not against the gospel is for it;" the Reformed affirming, that "what is not derived from the Bible is against it." Then, finally, the different turn taken in the historical development of the two churches is appealed to: in the Lutheran, a slight estimation of the external; in the Reformed, a leaning to a thorough remodelling of the external; in the former, the completion and improvement of the internal part of the edifice, pure doctrine; in the latter, the raising up of the superstructure, church order. But however the difference between the two churches may be explained, it is an historical fact that at one time the strife between them became most acrimonious; that at another their mutual

points of attraction found expression. The latter fact cannot and must not be lost sight of. That which unites the two churches outweighs that which separates them. Existing differences must as much be admitted as internal identity insisted on. It concerns us to proclaim not the unity indeed, but the unanimity of the two. It is true that the two churches did, during the last ten years, in consequence of the union which has in several countries, though in various degrees and on different grounds, been effected between them, and in connection with the revival of the confessional current, again exhibit a great degree of irritation and discord. But it could not, and did not last. Their mutual intercourse in the field of science was not destroyed, nor their active co-operation in that of practical activity for the interests of the kingdom of God interrupted ; their joint labours, in the Gustavus Adolphus Society in particular, keeping alive the conviction that they may be compared to a pair of eyes, of which, when the one suffers the other weeps.

In these our days too, differences of creed fall into the background in presence of those common Christian interests which are now called in question, and of the mighty crisis through which both the Romish and Protestant communions are now passing ; though it must be owned that their essential differences are exhibited in the differing characteristics which this crisis assumes in each.

Let us first direct our attention to that with which the Romish church is now visited. This church can,

indeed, point to much recent progress, especially in the matter of external organisation. Pope Pius IX. is said, during his sorrowful pontificate, to have instituted nearly a hundred new bishoprics. She is also concentrating her forces and taking fresh starts, as may be seen especially in her missionary undertakings. Nor does she less exert herself to preserve her influence over the various spheres of life; and in this respect it is a significant fact that a catholic bishop has published a treatise upon the labour question. Nor would we lose sight of the fact, that this church is as yet preserved from much which threatens our own. The infallibility of the Church in doctrinal matters, before which even thinking spirits, such as Gunther, have bowed, even to a broken-hearted recantation in the evening of life; a catholic nation which even, while swallowing Renan's romance, left the dogmas of the Church intact, and conformed itself, for the most part, to church forms; the willingness to make sacrifices found on the part of the faithful in various countries, to which not only the proceeds of the Peter's pence, but more especially the funds of church societies, bear eloquent testimony; the strict discipline which prevents schism among the ministers of the church; an organization carried out with uncommon consistency and utmost intellectual refinement, and which is now strict, now pliant; the irresistible force of a public opinion, as much excited as constantly directed by ecclesiastical authorities—these, and more than these, preserve the Romish church from much

to which our own is continually exposed. But Catholicism is ruled by the interests of the visible church, and it is at this very point that danger now threatens. Not only do the German Chambers disdain the concordats which have been concluded, not only is France more than ever mindful of Gallic privileges, not only are a number of monasteries annihilated in Poland, not only does the newly created empire of Mexico find itself obliged to sanction the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, but it is the Romish question itself which is threatening the whole catholic world with a schism which already extends to the midst of the very college of cardinals. Nor is it the position which this question occupies with respect to Italian nationality, but that which it assumes towards ecclesiastical affairs in general, which gives it its special weight and prominent importance. As soon as French protection ceases, the Papacy will have to meet the decisive question whether it can adhere to its former supports, or whether it must resolve upon a change which would necessarily entail the most widespread consequences upon the whole catholic world, and, I affirm, not upon this alone. Who can deny that the Roman Catholic church is standing at a critical turning point in its history?

And this is true, too, though in an entirely opposite sense, of the Protestant Church, and it is with this that we are more immediately concerned. If in the Romish church opposition is directed chiefly against her external establishment and monarchical

head, it is in our own directed principally against her doctrine, and consequently against her very heart.

Let us first observe the great theological problems which agitate her. There is, indeed, scarcely any article of our system of church doctrine whose scientific reconstruction is not contended for, with all the power of intellectual effort; yet two questions are brought most prominently forward in these our days. The one concerns the person of Christ—the Head of the Church; the other, the Word of God—her rule of conduct. Whose Son is He?—is one of these questions. Is Holy Scripture inspired by God?—the other. Thus both the heart of Christianity and the very nerve of the church's life are involved in these questions. As it fares with the person of Christ, so does it fare with the nature of the church. As it fares with the Holy Scriptures, so does it fare with the strength of the church. If Christ is merely man, though the greatest among all born of women, then the church, too, though under Divine guidance, is essentially a merely human work. If Holy Scripture is a merely human production, though the greatest and mightiest, the church is working with a merely human instrument, and lacks the demonstration of the spirit and of power. In both cases she lacks the assurance of hope, in both, Christian faith is devoid of the victory which overcometh the world. The very life and future of the church are concerned in the decision of these questions. Nor is it only since yesterday that theology has been occupied with them.

They were not first excited by the works of Renan and Strauss, though their writings did make them burning questions to the whole Christian world. It may be regarded as one of the characteristic marks of the age that the great problems of religion are ceasing to be confined to the narrow circle of theological mysteries. The popular character of the church of the future is exhibited in this particular also, that the vital questions by which it is affected, affect the people also.

In these two problems is involved also the point at which the Christian view of the world comes in collision with opposing tendencies. It is on these new grounds that it will be decided whether or not naturalism and rationalism are to continue to be the motive and deciding powers they have been in the world. It is true that Christ's credentials are but subordinately to be sought in His miracles. But Christianity is itself a miracle, and, indeed, the greatest of all miracles. This is involved in its supernatural character. And with this the church stands or falls. The conviction of this fact is bluntly expressed by Strauss in the sentence,—"They who would clear the church of popes, must first clear religion of miracles."* Now, miracles are of two kinds, physical and mental. Naturalism chiefly attacks the former, because it knows no higher laws than the laws of nature. Rationalism chiefly attacks the latter, because it knows no higher source of knowledge than human reason.

* *Leben Jesu für deutsche Volk bearbeitet*, P. xix.

The offshoot of naturalism is a coarse materialism, which buries the realm of the invisible under the world of the visible. Rationalism culminates in that onesided criticism of Holy Scripture, which sacrifices their divinity and truth in behalf of external historical comprehensibility. Both extend through every department of the evangelical church. Now, the highest of natural miracles is the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the highest of mental miracles the Divine inspiration of Scripture. We see, then, that it is at these points chiefly that opposing views and tendencies encounter each other. We are waiting to see which will triumph, which will fall. And the people also are busying themselves about this matter, but that, not in alliance with the Church, but, for the most part at least, in opposition thereto.

For it must not be concealed that a great part of the Protestant population is at variance with the Protestant Church. There is a great gulf fixed between the faith which the Church professes, and the faith which the majority of her members partakes. Even where outward opposition is not expressed, inward declension is not lacking. If the prevailing disposition of the age is not an irreligious one, it certainly is not on the whole a church one. I will not inquire whether the Bishop of Paderborn is right when he affirms * that he knows of Protestant towns of 18,000 inhabitants, in which only from 32 to

* In his pamphlet, "*Ein bischöfliches wort an die Protestanten Deutchlands*," p. 21, &c.

34 church-goers are to be found ; or that in many places the baptism of children is general only in consequence of the employment of police regulations ; or that from no single pulpit is justification by faith only taught, in which latter point he is most certainly mistaken. But it is a fact that, in a town such as Berlin, with its population of 650,000 inhabitants, the existing churches can accommodate only 40,000, and that they are said to be seldom filled. To apply this fact to other cities, even to our own, is not to deviate very widely from the actual state of things. But the condition of large cities must not be absolutely attributed to other Protestant congregations. There is still much traditional churchmanship ; but there is a want of a corresponding morality. Even voluntary sacrifice for church purposes is often sought in vain. It is calculated that the collections for the Gustavus Adolphus Society do not, in the countries where they are made, amount on an average to two *pfenige* a head. Great sacrifices are made for the missionary cause in certain circles, but the majority keep utterly aloof. To this may be added, that in those cases in which the material and spiritual interests of the Church are opposed, the latter always come off worst. Nor can it be denied that, in many circles, an undeniable prejudice against the Church, and a wide-spread mistrust of the Church exist. Retrograde tendencies are suspected in the Church's most justifiable expressions. If in her worship she brings forward her old,

lost, yet glorious treasures, a catholicising spirit is imputed. In Protestantism such stress is laid upon the principle of free inquiry, that the equally essential one of the obedience of faith is lost sight of. Associations for church work are branded with the ill-applied and worse understood name of pietism. With this irritation against the arrangements of the Church are combined efforts for the emancipation of the various spheres of life from her control. This is seen in the most opposite departments; it is manifested in the family, in the way in which the making of marriage a merely civil act is insisted upon; in education, in the separation of the school from the church; while in political life, the non-religiousness of the State is ever increasingly dwelt upon. It is not our present purpose to inquire whether, or how far, actual antagonism may be the cause of these efforts, whether they are real necessities which thus seek expression. Our business is merely to state the facts. But it is also one of these facts, that the spirit in which these demands are made is, in many cases, not that of good will, but of antipathy. The Church, indeed, furnishes an inexhaustible supply of combustible matter. For no sooner does a somewhat stronger current set in churchwards than it bursts into flames.

And why is this? Many causes may have combined to produce this effect. Amongst them the amalgamation of the Church with the State, and the partial abuse of the Church by the State; the slight participation of the congregations in church matters,

and the consequent alienation of the people from church interests, which has for centuries prevailed ; the exaggeration of the ministerial office which has in some cases taken place, and provoked local contentions ; the fact that certain church governments have failed in the observation of the cardinal principle, that in church matters men must be persuaded, not coerced ; and even that the Church has waited too long for her friends to come to her, instead of going herself to meet her friends. But all these and more of a similar nature do not offer a sufficient explanation. The cause lies far deeper, even in that separation of modern culture from the Church which has already been partly effected, and which is partly in process of being effected.

There was a time when the Church was the exclusive vehicle of culture. Even when the Church emancipated herself from priestly oppression at the Reformation, she gave a mighty impetus to a new epoch in the progress of civilization. Now culture has been severed from the Church. It developes itself, or is at least supposed to do so, independently of the Church, and hence appears self-supported beside the Church, or even antagonistic to her. It has even come to this, that many consider the Church to have been left behind by modern culture, and not to be regarded as an instrument, but, to use Vogt's cynical expresssion, as "a drag upon civilization."

Is it asked, what is modern culture ? We answer, that it consists in the leading ideas which

rule the mind of the present generation, in the intellectual deposit with which the line of general education has marked the present; in certain efforts which form the present standards in the departments of material interests, science, national and social life. It is these which give to our age its peculiar impress and its special advantages, but which constitute also its special danger. All this, however, I have to consider only in so far as it affects Christianity and the Church.

If we consider closely the leading ideas which rule the mind of the present generation, and with which our era is, so to speak, whether consciously or unconsciously, saturated, we shall not fail to make the surprising discovery that these first appeared upon the human horizon together with, and in Christianity. Christianity was the mother that bore and nourished them, at least in their pure and full extent. But in the course of time they left her fostering care, went their own ways, thus doing service to strange powers, and becoming in many respects degenerated. The parable of the prodigal son has been repeated in the case of a part of that sphere of thought which was originally of Christian origin. Arbitrary separation from the father's house has been its ruin. Return thereto can alone prove its restoration.

There is no idea which so powerfully rules the present age as that of humanity. A great and noble thought truly! It is to be lamented that we have no native word for it. What is meant by it is

the notion of the nobility of human nature, and a conduct in man consistent with this nobility. It is the notion of a pure and perfect humanity which is expressed by it. And it was Christianity which first introduced this notion. The præ-christian ages were reaching forth towards it, but never attained to it either in its full meaning or entire extent. Not in its full meaning — for they never comprehended man's elevation above the forces of nature; not in its entire extent, for the woman, the child, and the slave, besides losing their social importance, were deprived of their full human dignity. Add to this the distinction between Greeks and Barbarians, and what a limitation, what a delusion in mankind do we perceive! Christianity, on the contrary, first made man, fully and entirely man. In Christ man is not abased but exalted. To be a Christian, is to be fully and entirely a man. In the idea of the divine image is found that of the nobility of human nature, without distinction of races, as it is nowhere else found; in the single fact of the God-man is involved the premiss that humanity is capable of assimilation with the divine, as it is nowhere else involved; with the thought of the kingdom of God, all those boundaries which separate man from man fall, as they nowhere else fall; in the new birth man's better self is saved from his lower self, as it is nowhere else saved. In Christianity nothing truly human is crushed, but, on the contrary, exalted and glorified. Christianity is the religion of humanity.

Its natural postulate is nothing else than the unity of the human race, its mission aims at the whole race, it recognises no difference between man and man, it allots to all equal rights and duties. It is the church's part to realise these tendencies. And yet, who can deny that at the present day the idea of humanity is not in a position of union with Christianity, but of marked coldness towards it? The ideas of the rights of man, philanthropy, human happinesss, or by whatsoever names they may be called, are expressed and sought to be realised not only apart from connection with the church, but in actual opposition to it. And what is the consequence? The idea of humanity has declined into a false ideality, which over-estimates the goodness of the natural heart, leans upon the self-sufficiency of human reason, and makes pretensions in the name of the absolute rights of man, with which reality is nowhere found to accord. The idea has, in the dissolution of its connection with its Christian foundation, lost its corrective. And what is this? What but dealing seriously and earnestly with human sin? Modern humanity upholds the idea of man as he ought to be, without reference to man as experience shows him to be, and hence offends against reality. Christianity lays hold of man as he is, and leads to the goal of man as he ought to be. This is a difference of the most far reaching consequence, and it is one of the leading topics of the day!

And what has been said applies also to the idea of liberty. We all know how powerfully this stirs the present race. And this, too, was originally the offspring of Christianity. Christianity is the religion of liberty. She views faith as an act of liberty, and leads believers into the glorious liberty of the children of God. They whom the Son makes free are free indeed, even though in chains.* Undoubtedly moral freedom is primarily intended. But we are given to understand that this will exercise its influence upon every other department of life. It is universally true that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.† With what irresistible power has Christianity overcome slavery, and that by no outward opposition, but from within. How much has Christianity contributed, whether in private or in public, to bring about a recognition of the rights of personality in the political world. Equally to pass over other matters, is it a fact that no event in the world's history, since the introduction of Christianity, has done such service to the cause of liberty as the Reformation, and that was a Church event. Nor is it less a fact that such modern nations as have succeeded in establishing their political liberties on lasting foundations have done so while "a Christian and evangelical opinion has been the ruling impulse of their popular life." Truly was Tocqueville in the right when he said "that a people who would be free, must be-

* John viii. 36. † 2 Cor. iii. 17.

lieve ; and a people who will not believe must serve."* Despotism can well dispense with faith, but liberty cannot. The weaker the external restraits of a nation, the stronger must the internal be. Nothing can be more superficial than to be ever seeking for guarantees of liberty in forms and institutions only, or in political intelligence, instead of seeking them chiefly in a morality founded upon religion, and a conscience sharpened by faith. A nation must first be a Christian one before it is capable of becoming a free one. Hence every friend of true liberty ought to be a friend of the Church. But is this the case ? The idea of freedom has also lost its corrective in our times—and what is this ? What but to seek for liberty, not in freedom from, but in union with the arrangements instituted by God. And this Christianity demands, but it is beyond the comprehension of the age !

Thus the ideas which rule the age are pervaded by an irritating dissension from their original source. Where unity ought to prevail, separation has taken place. It is the one great grievance, but this very grievance is characteristic of the age !

Another mark of modern culture is a greater manysidedness in human development. The great advantage which our era enjoys in this respect is unmistakeable. The intellectual horizon is far more extensive than it formerly was, the intellectual deposit

* Comp. *Protestant Monatsblätter für innere Zeitgeschichte*, published by Gelzer, 1862. No. III., p. 169.

which we denote by the term average education, far more comprehensive, the range of knowledge which has extended to the lower classes far more widely disseminated; taste is far purer, the sense of the beautiful more developed—in a word, what we call general education is of a higher class than in any preceding age. Combined with this is a facility of intercourse which assures to the productions of literature and the fine arts, a propagation heretofore unimagined. The discoveries of science become common property, with a rapidity which is truly astonishing. And this is true also of inventions. The times have passed away in which whole generations lived quietly and contentedly within their city walls or in remote villages, without as much as inquiring what might lie beyond them. An extension of their horizon has reached to all classes of the people. Yet this is not without its perils. Much miseducation and seeming education is connected with it, much superficial imitation prevails, and knowledge puffeth up, half-knowledge most of all. But, above all, does the direction of the understanding which is found in modern education tend to produce an utter absence of feeling, whose after effects influence the relation of the people to the Church. St Paul says, "To write the same things to me indeed is not grievous." The present generation says, To hear the same things to me is grievous. It does not care to hear the same old truths ever and again repeated in the preaching of God's word, nor can it understand that these old truths are ever, new

In spite of the many-sidedness which must be acknowledged, there is a terrible kind of one-sidedness from which modern culture suffers. Even to the most superficial observation, a great want of Christian knowledge is apparent. The most elementary matters in this province have vanished from general consciousness. And this involves another great danger. Our race is losing the capacity for reconciling the progress of general science with revelation. The effort to effect such a reconciliation has ever existed among Christian people. And this was formerly an easy task when a few scattered physical facts, without internal connection, and a superficial knowledge of history, were all that was possessed. But in our days, there is a continual introduction of new and increasingly overwhelming educational impulses; and the working out of these and their reconcilement with personal faith becomes increasingly difficult. Hence the fact that many who wish to believe cannot believe. They cannot get over the stumbling-blocks which meet them at every step. This must be understood, and to understand it is, to use the words of Georges Sand, the same as to forgive it. But then it is a fact that even education turns out to the detriment of the Church, to the isolation of the Church. This is another grievance, but it is a grievance which is a mark of the age.

Another peculiarity of modern culture is the progressive dominion of man over the material world,

by means on the one hand of his increased acquaintance with it, and on the other of its consequent subjugation to him. The first is the scientific, the second the practical point of view. Hence, on the one side, the great strides made by the sciences relating to these matters ; on the other, the great advances made in the industrial arts, in appreciation of inventions, in the use of machinery, in the results of labour. It is an utterly false view of the Church and of Christianity to represent them as antagonistic to such progress.

Both are opposed to every kind of worldliness, but they demand no pietistic renunciation of the world. Christ did not pray that God should take His people out of the world, but that He should keep them from the evil in the world. If there be any one system which regards man as the lord of creation, it is Christianity. "All things are yours ; and ye are Christ's," exclaims St Paul. The life to come is not the sole distinctive feature of Christianity, it would but assure to the life that now is its relation to eternity. It is not, as has been said, that the religion of Protestantism is but one long sigh to heaven ; it is true that the Christian does sigh to heaven, but one of these sighs and the central petition of the Lord's Prayer is, Give us this day our daily bread. Christianity inculcates no depreciation of our earthly existence, but its true appreciation, as the preliminary step to our heavenly existence. It would be the leaven to per-

vade with its transforming and renewing powers even our earthly interests, even the labours and cares of life. The fact is, that amidst earthly interests, Christian and moral interests are forgotten ; that in opposition to the one-sided idealism of the past, undue weight is now given to the equally one-sided materialism of the present. Hence the predominance of material over all other interests, hence the low estimation of those gifts which bestow upon life its dignity and sacredness ; hence the exclusive pursuit of earthly things, hence the increased tendency to luxury. In opposition to these, Christianity advocates and must advocate the ideal powers of life. And for this very reason the existing schism becomes ever more and more manifest.

And must I take a glance at the other side, at the non-theological sciences. What, then, are science and the church to be set one against another as though they were irreconcileable antagonists ? The fact that revelation, whose representative the church is, has itself become a subject of science, ought to guard us against such an error. And Protestantism especially, is, according to the well-known saying of a late theologian, by its very nature related to science, investigation being, as it is, one of its intrinsic motive powers. There is such a thing as reconciliation between science and the church, and it is not far off from any pious mind. Was Newton less great because he was accustomed to take off his hat whenever the name of God was mentioned ? Or was Lalande the greater

because of his saying, that he had surveyed the heavens with the farthest reaching telescope, but had not found God? God is no more to be discovered by telescopes than the soul by the dissecting knife of the anatomist. Two different spheres are here in question, and in that of religion it is said, that what cannot be perceived by the understanding of the wise, may be discerned by the simplicity of a child-like mind. Knowledge is power, but not omnipotence. All true science has, at least since Socrates, been conscious of its limited nature; and conversely, revelation also has imposed limits upon itself. Holy Scripture is not, and was never meant to be, a codex of physical, politico-economical, or psychologic knowledge. Scripture does not teach us to look upon the facts of nature by the light of the facts of salvation, it does but show the way in which human society may become, and manifest itself to be, the society of the redeemed, it views and points to man only on the side of his natural organisation, by means of which he both needs and is capable of happiness. Science bestows upon man that which he is of himself utterly incapable of attaining. The former has nothing to fear from what is really truth, and can prove itself to be such; the latter should seek nothing but what is really truth, and should wait to see if it proves itself to be such. To adduce but one instance, I remind you of the biblical history of the creation. Revelation never intended to give us therein the solution of a scientific problem, but to teach us to view creation as

an essential link in the chain of the history of salvation. Of natural science, however, we have a right to expect that it should not set up as certain conclusions hypotheses concerning which no unanimity has been attained, and of which an evident proof is impossible. In short, as for revelation and science—it is necessary to human progress that they should mutually complete each other, and certain that they who place them in irreconcileable antagonism, utterly misapprehend the nature and limits of both, either failing to discern the limits prescribed to the human mind in its pursuit of science, or the limits which the Spirit of God has prescribed to itself in revelation. I doubt not but that this discernment will yet force its way. But as yet it is by no means general. The variance exists even in the last-named aspect. This is another grievance, but a grievance which is a mark of our age.

But there is one feeling, which in the most striking manner sways the popular mind in our days, and which we may not pass over in silence, because its influence upon the church is also most important. I mean the national movement. This might, perhaps, at first sight seem but slightly to affect Christianity and the church. Yet Christianity is a bond equally embracing all nations; yet it is said that here there is neither Greek nor Jew; yet the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. National selfishness is as little compatible with the vocation of a Christian nation as national arrogance. But

it is only what is sinful in nations, their forced exclusiveness and mutual contempt that Christianity would repel. As Christ could enter into human nature without sharing in its sin, so does Christianity enter into the various national peculiarities without approving of national sins. A definite thought of God is incorporated in each nation, Christianity would lend its help to work out this thought. And for this purpose it makes use of the church. Hence it has been most rightly shown that a deep reaching mutual influence exists between ecclesiastical and national life. It is true that no nation can actually increase that treasure of salvation which the church bears in an earthen vessel—but it is no less true that every nation has its special vocation to fulfil towards the church. Each nation has its weak points which belong to the world, and which faith must overcome, but each nation has also its special gifts which form the organs by which faith must work. Hence the more prominent nations have exercised a decided influence upon the conformation of the church, the Greeks chiefly by their care for doctrine, the Romans by giving completeness to ecclesiastical organisation, the Germans by their culture of internal experience. And this is the reason why the German mind is so essentially related to the evangelical Christian mind. As truly as the German nation is placed in the heart of Europe, and has its special national vocation with respect to the Sclavonic peoples on the one hand, and the Roman nations on the other, so surely is it its vo-

cation to be essentially Christian, to vindicate the inward power of genuine Christianity in opposition to mere Romish externalism, and to assert its vitality in opposition to its Sclavo-Byzantine ossification. Our nation has often been compared with Israel. But the comparison is not an apt one. The vocation of Israel, with respect to the history of redemption, was unique. Salvation is of the Jews. But thus much is undeniable, thus much may be indisputably proved from its history; the vocation of our nation is a religious one. And to this belong a sincere love for God's truth, a deep reverence for all that is sacred, a cultivation of Christian morality within and beyond the domestic circle, a faithfulness with regard to the blessings of salvation, such as the preaching of free grace, and faith in this grace, alone can give. Hence every departure from Christian principles is a downward step in the national decay. And German strength and unity will not return without German piety and morality. But how far, how very far are we from this goal? As things now are, separation in creed is rather made responsible for the separation in our Fatherland,* as if every day did not furnish fresh proof, that the fault lies not in the religious but with the political dualism. Thus even the national movement is turned against the church. It is a great

* Comp. e.g. Strauss *Leben Jesu*, P. xx. "What is it, then, which when the nation makes a start towards a comprehensive unity, puts an obstacle in its path, which utterly envenoms that separation between north and south which is already sufficiently dangerous, what but the dualism of creeds?"

grievance deeply felt, not only by the friend of Christianity, but by the lover of his country. But so it is that even this grievance is one of the marks of the age!

We have thus seen how the Church is affected by the vital powers of the present age, and has her special blessing for each. But in one place she sees her helping hand rejected; in another her own life-veins opened. Here she is degraded into the handmaid of politics, there theatened by destructive forces in the innermost sanctuary of her faith. Rent within, still torn by factions, uprooted by intersecting forces, unsupported by public opinion, on the whole insufficiently upheld by her own children, and often injured by well-meant zeal,—such is her present condition. And with all these disadvantages she is standing at the climax of a conflict perhaps unparalleled since the first century of the Christian era, and in which she has to prove herself to be the seeking and saving, the purifying and preserving, the striving and praying friend of souls, the guardian of the nation, the missionary to the whole world!

Our lot is fallen in evil times. But times of trial are times of purification. And this is true, especially of the Church. The greater the trials laid upon her, the more powerfully is her divine power exerted; and this power is the Word of God. The more arduous the conflict in which she is engaged, the more mighty do her weapons appear; and these are prayers and

tears.* The greater the need, the nearer the help—and our help is the Lord.

Our age has been called the age of unsolvable questions; and in fact it does abound in demands which it appears inevitable to encounter, yet impossible to satisfy. But what if the Church could assist in finding the answer to the forest of queries around us? What if the Church which is by many, at least, so little regarded, were actually to furnish the solution of the enigmas with which the age presents us?

The question is: How is she to do this? My next lecture shall attempt to answer it.

* Preces et lacrymæ sunt arma ecclesiæ.

LECTURE II.

THE PRESENT TASKS OF THE CHURCH.

I LATELY sought to depict the position occupied by the Church at the present day. This position is no normal one. Whatever we may think of the causes which have induced this condition, its existence cannot be denied. And the less so, since the tasks now set before the Church must be estimated in conformity therewith. We ask then, what these are?

The whole work of the Church is, in the deepest sense, the work of self-edification. All that the Church does, if it be but done according to the will of God, turns at last to her own profit. When the Church wins souls for the Lord, and brings them to Christian faith and practice, she is making these souls her own. When the Church builds up her members upon our most holy faith, she is building up herself. When the Church triumphs over opposition, whether from within or from without, she has always the largest share of the profit. Every act of the Church is, so to speak, an act upon herself and for herself. Even what she effects for the individual

always reacts either directly or indirectly upon the whole. The exertions in which she is occupied are also the benefactions she receives. Her seed-time is always a harvest: her labour is always her reward.

Her work, too, has been at all times one and the same. She preaches the word of grace; she dispenses the means of grace, instituted by the Lord. She is uninterruptedly reaching back to her eternal foundation, and unceasingly pressing forwards toward her eternal goal. She is ever more and more working out her own God-designed nature, and working into the world the gifts bestowed upon her. She works in the Christian world, and there her task is to cherish Christianity; she works in the non-Christian world, and there her task is to propagate Christianity.

Nor is it otherwise in these days. But each age sets special aims before her. The character of each age determines the manner after which and the direction in which the Church must perform the work which is common to her in all ages. There are times of quiet possession, in which she has to work up what she has acquired; and there are times of unquiet struggle, in which she has to acquire fresh material. In the former the chief matter is not to lose her inherent powers of resistance; in the latter, not to neglect the retention of what she already possesses. Fresh forces are ever placing themselves at her disposal, and these she must appreciate; opposing powers are ever attacking her in new manners, and

these she must overcome. Thus do new times impose new tasks, and her duty at any time is dictated by her condition in the same.

A glance at the age will show us that two tasks are specially pointed out to the church at the present day. The one her own progressive completion, the other the superintendence and instruction of her members. The former cannot be performed without the deepest self-penetration, nor the latter without the most thorough absorption, the most universal activity. The fact that these two points so directly coincide constitutes the peculiarity, and at the same time the difficulty of the task at present placed before the church.

Nor this alone. In both these respects the church finds herself placed on the defensive. When the Israelites returned from captivity and rebuilt their ruined walls, it was said (Nehem. iv. 17), "with one hand they builded, with the other they held the sword." And this is the case with the church in our days. With the one hand she does her work, while with the other she holds her sword. Her self-edification cannot advance in the present time unaccompanied by self-defence. The success of the one depends essentially upon the success of the other. This is another peculiarity, and at the same time another difficulty in the church's present work.

We begin with the church's task of self-completion, which is, in our days especially, a threefold one,

and brings before our notice her doctrine, worship, and constitution. In all these respects important tasks lie before the church.

And first, her completion in doctrine. What, then, has not the matter of Christian doctrine been given once for all? Do we not possess the Church creeds? Have we not the Word of God? Certainly. But the Word of God, to speak first of this, is no system of doctrine. It is the work of science to obtain this from it. We have four gospels. Each of them places before us a picture of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, but each gives this in its own fashion, each follows a special tendency, which influences both the choice and arrangement of its historical materials. The life of Christ, notwithstanding the short period which it occupies, is so infinite a subject that it was impossible to comprise it in one painting. It is like a landscape which is ever presenting a fresh picture, according to the point of view from which it is beheld, while it still remains the same landscape. Thus each gospel represents its own point of view. In that of St. Matthew Christ is represented chiefly in the abundance of his Messianic sufferings, as fulfilling thereby the law and the prophets, and founding and establishing his kingdom; in that of St. Mark, as revealing most powerfully his Divine Sonship; in that of St. Luke, chiefly as seeking lost man without respect to national limitation; in that of St. John, in the abundance of his divine-human nature, as leaving the bosom of the

Father, manifesting his glory both in chronological and internal gradation, and originating a new life for mankind. It is, then, from these varied reflections in which one and the same Christ is exhibited to us, that a joint image of his person, his teaching, and his work, is to be collected. And this is the business of science. Moreover, what is true of the person of Christ is true of the whole body of revealed truth. Revealed truth is like the ray of light which is broken into the various prismatic colours, but is still the same ray. The apostles deliver to us the truths of salvation, not as something externally delivered to them, but personally originated in them. Revelation is in their case personal illumination also. Hence it is that it appears bearing the peculiar stamp of each mind. Hence it is that Paul speaks of *his* gospel. We can even distinguish the differing predilections of the apostles. In St. James stress is laid upon the active morality of the Christian life; in St. Peter upon the perception of its future perfection; in St. Paul upon the energy of its perpetual development; in St. John upon the happiness of its inherent and everlasting satisfaction. When, added to this, it is considered that all their epistles are occasional compositions, dictated by various circumstances, directed by varying aims, that the several doctrines are scattered in divers manners through these compositions, the peculiar position occupied by Holy Scripture will be the more easily understood. It is the perpetual fountain of

Christian doctrine, but not a system of Christian doctrine. Hence the church must ever and again have recourse to this fountain, and draw from it. A vast amount of thought and labour have, during the course of the church's history, been already devoted to such a purpose. And this is a work which is not yet completed.

Not even by the creeds of the Church. It is well known how each individual Church has set up its own creed. Every Church tends towards a creed. Every Church must know what it does and what it does not believe, what it does and what it does not want. And it is in its confession of faith that this consciousness is localised. This, too, has been the case with our own Church, which has laid down both general and special confessions for the instruction of the people. But our creeds occupy a different position from those of the Romish Church. The latter are the certain undoubted expression of tradition, in which, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, the exclusively true meaning of Holy Scripture is verbally incorporated. Hence they stand above Scripture, and can suffer no correction from Scripture ; either they must be received, or heresy incurred. Our creeds, on the contrary, make no pretensions to an absolutely binding authority in matters of faith, but would be tried by Holy Scripture as the supreme rule and standard of all faith. They embody two convictions, the one that what they state is truth, and the other that they state it under human and temporal limitation.

They furnish a summary expression of Christian truth, but not a system of doctrine absolutely and for ever completed. Besides, they do not expatiate upon every doctrine, and while speaking in part in the scientific language of their age, they are also determined by a regard to its theological and ecclesiastical movements, and prove their tenets by the scientific means at their disposal. They are a testimony to the faith, but also the production of their age. They stand in most intimate union with Scripture, and treat it with the tenderest reverence, they often take truly prophetical glances of Scripture, and follow, with wonderful tact, both in general and in detail, its deepest thoughts and meaning, but they do not render future labours on its soil superfluous. On the contrary, they have, beyond all else, given an impulse to new efforts. It would be an entirely erroneous view to see in theology a mere expounder of creeds. There have been times when this has been the case, but it was an error, and is now recognised as such on all sides. A mere repetition of what was decided upon at the Reformation is not enough. Nor should it be. Modes of thought have changed, our intellectual apparatus is more extensive, the interpretation of Holy Scripture has, with respect both to facts and philology, made most important progress. Be it ours to resort again and again to God's Word, with these our more abundant means, that we may extract from it fresh treasures, test by it our present body of doctrine, and bring to light from the inmost depths of revelation

the purpose and truth of God concerning our salvation. In such a resort to Holy Scripture, different aims will, in different ages, predominate. And ours at the present day must be, although no dogma is entirely excluded from this mental labour, especially to vindicate the living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to his pantheistic unification with the world, and his deistic separation from the world; to comprehend the human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus without thereby compromising the Divine, and other like matters. For such purposes peace and tranquillity are requisite, while instead of these the truth of Scripture is itself called in question. But it is one of God's dealings in history to cause inimical opposition to revelation to issue in larger acquisitions of Scriptural knowledge and the perception of new aspects of the truth. All this, indeed, seems to be primarily the concern of theology. But the knowledge, which is attained in the way of scientific inquiry, if it be confirmed, flows into the Church itself through the channel of Church confessions. The individual investigator discovers a natural law, and it presently becomes common property, in the form of an invention; so also is the fruit of that development of doctrine which theology effects, propagated throughout the Church by means of preaching. Whatever the former attains, exercises a beneficial influence upon the latter.

If doctrine is the basis of the Church's life, worship is its central point. As it is with a church's worship, so is it with itself. And the nature of its worship manifests what is its essential nature. Its worship testifies whether it lays more weight upon its inward faith or its external works; whether it is more contemplative and devout, or more temperate and judicious. It is in its worship that the deepest vital powers of a church are perceptible. Here is it that God, by means of the Word and sacraments, draws near to the flock. Here is it that the flock draws near to God. Here is it that each member manifests his intimate and individual communion with God; and here is it that all the members of the flock combine together in a holy unity. Here each is a giver; for the devoutness of the individual quickens that of his neighbours. Here each is a receiver; for what the whole congregation effects in devotion, reacts with blessed influence upon the individual. Here the members of the flock become conscious of a gracious Giver—hence their praise and thanksgiving; but they become also conscious of their misdeeds—hence their prayers and confessions. Here the edifying power inherent in the Church is made most evident; nay, we borrow the very notion of edification, in its narrower sense, from divine worship. Discipline and the care of souls, if practised anywhere, are practised here. And here the flock, by coming to God, come in the true sense of the word to themselves. Thus all the various relations

of Church life meet in its worship as in a focus. And man is accompanied by worship from the cradle to the grave. It is the central position occupied by worship which causes every alienation from the Church to manifest itself by an alienation from the Church's worship. Alas! that we should see so many symptoms of this in our days. This alienation is connected, as is self-evident, with the whole Christian development, but not less is it testified to by the development which has taken place in our worship itself. This exhibits, in many points, a declension from its original idea. Its original copiousness has in many respects given way to poverty, its original heartiness to moderatism, its original order to arbitrariness. Look at our agenda formularies, how often are they devoid of power and unction. Look at our Church hymns, how frequently instead of resting satisfied with a justifiable amount of alteration, have their pithy contents been diluted. Look at the liturgy of our public worship, the taste for it, the appreciation of it, have all but departed. Look at our preaching, instead of being the central point of the whole liturgy, and exercising its just influence in connection therewith, it is, for the most part, that which alone attracts people to our churches, all edification being thus made dependant upon the individual gifts of the preacher; and finally, look at the fact that reciprocity between the pastor and the flock is almost obliterated, and that the congregation, with the exception of their participation in the church singing,

are reduced to complete passivity. In all these faults lie so many duties for our age. The power of appreciating the entire organism of our worship must be revived. That power of edification which our worship, viewed as a whole, possesses, must be restored to it. Many of its lost fragments must be reinstated, not because they are old, but because they are good. Justice must again be done to the symbolism of our worship, so far as it serves evangelical truth, and is consistent with evangelical simplicity. And, above all, the congregation must again be attracted to a larger amount of co-operation. Such is the task which lies before us, and it is one for the accomplishment of which quite as much historical knowledge as refined tact and evangelical fidelity, is needed.

The third task incumbent upon the church refers to its constitution. We do not, indeed, suppose that every kind of benefit is to be expected from reforms effected in this respect. The external regulations of the church are, indeed, the vehicles and guardians of its inner life where this already exists, but they do not create it, at least not directly, where it is absent. It is also to be lamented that so little was done in this respect in past times. Arrangements which might have been carried into effect in a period of peace and tranquillity, have now to be begun in a period of agitation. We are consequently suffering from the neglect of former times, and this suffering we are constrained to bear. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the original intentions of the Reformers

have been nowhere less carried out than in the matter of church constitution. As things now are the congregations have not attained the position and co-operation corresponding with the idea of the reformers, nor with their own relation to the clerical office and to the church. It concerns us to organise an ecclesiastical corporation distinct from the civil corporation, for it is an anomaly that the ecclesiastical corporation should be represented exclusively by the representatives of the civil corporation. It concerns us to provide a representation of the congregation for the assistance of those who fill the clerical office, for there are large fields of operation, such as the care of church customs, the exercise of church discipline, which are entirely impracticable without the co-operation of the laity. Far from its being the fact that a duly arranged participation of the people in such matters would encroach upon the clerical office, it would rather increase its effectiveness. It has been no advantage to the clerical office to have been left without a body to represent the congregation, this circumstance has in many respects isolated it with regard to the people, and made it fail to find a response and support from the flock; while on the other hand, the suspicion that it desires to rule and not to serve, has increased, and a mistrust of its so-called hierarchical tendencies has prevailed. And, finally, it concerns us to furnish a representation of the church with respect to church government. The member is assuredly subordinate to the whole body, but it also contributes to the

development of the whole. Its nature is determined by that of the entire organism, while in its turn it exercises a determining reaction thereon. The two cannot be separated. It is to be in an imperfect condition, when the one is influential and the other not so. As yet it is only the former which has been influential with us. This is a fault in our historical development. A healthy condition requires both. There must be organs to guide the whole church in a firm and independent manner—the organs of church government. But there must also be organs through which the entire body of our congregations can react upon the church—and this is church representation. If in the former the church current runs downwards from above, in the latter it flows upwards from below. Both the idea of the church, and the historical development of our relations require a completion of both sides. The matter, however, is not as has been demanded by one side, the erection of constitution out of the laity, which would be to break with history; but the incorporation of the laity into the constitution of the church, and this would be to follow history. For the whole development of our ecclesiastical constitution points with urgent necessity to the elevation of the so-called third state. I am well able to appreciate the perils connected with such a course in these our days. We are reminded, if we contemplate it, that the spiritual pre-requisites which it demands are wanting in our congregations. Nevertheless, I am certain that all work for the church awakens an interest in the church;

I am certain that the right of ecclesiastical representation exerts a fostering influence upon any ecclesiastical leanings; and, finally, I am certain that public opinion, without order, never so beneficially exerts its inherent power as when it is publicly expressed in the way of order. Is it asked: Must then the church also be subjected to the determinations of the majority? We admit that it is one of the errors of the age to count votes instead of weighing them, and to prefer the demonstrations of masses. It is especially deplorable when scientific interests are made to depend upon a majority of votes. In science, no less than in art, one vote is often of more value than all the rest together. And what is true in matters of art and scientific truth, is no less so in those of faith. These must be withdrawn from the decision of the majority, or the conscience would be under the worst tyranny imaginable. But we are treating now not merely of what is necessary for the salvation of souls, but of what is useful and profitable to the church as an earthly institution. And in this respect, if only due bounds are observed, the danger is incomparably less. Yet even here one pre-requisite is indispensable. And this is that the people should no longer persevere in a state of alienation from the church, but should again feel an affection for it.

And this leads me to the second point, without which all that has hitherto been mentioned would be but labour lost, viz., the Christian edification of the church's members. The goal set before the church

in this respect is in general clear and plain. And what is this but to break through the existing alienation from the church, to remove the manifold mistrust of the church, to overcome the false notions of all that is Christian which possess whole classes, to refute the prejudices which the church has to encounter at every step, to make vital Christianity the common property of Christendom, to cherish Christian sentiment in every phase of popular life, to promote Christian knowledge both in the higher and lower classes, to awaken a desire for spiritual blessings, to evoke especially an appreciation of Holy Scripture and that kind of affection for it which men feel for their own homes, to make the public conscience more tender, to maintain Christian morality, in a word, again to saturate the popular with the Christian mind? A great, a mighty task. And one not to be accomplished by mere human effort. The Head of the church alone can effect it. The poet says: Miracle is the favourite child of faith; but we may, with equal right, reverse the sentence and say: Faith is the child of miracle. It is not begotten in the way of nature, but born of grace. Hence the church must not trust to human means, and as little to any of the human schemes of all kinds which are in our days continually emerging and sinking again. Notions, which are to-day scarcely matured, are superseded by new ideas to-morrow. We live too fast in these times, and the church would do well to be on her guard against this continual change of schemes. Nor should she ever forget that the evils she

suffers can only be healed from within. Let the diseased body become inwardly sound, and the outward symptoms of its malady will gradually disappear. And this is the case in our days. The way in which the church must seek the cure of her disorders must not be to begin with those which are external and proceed to those which are internal, but to begin within, the way pointed out to her by God is that alone of striving for the formation of personal conviction.

These are, however, only the general principles which should direct the Church's operations. There are, besides, special principles pointed out by her present condition, and needing attention at the present time. And these I would now bring before your notice.

And first, I affirm that the Church must recognise and use every point of contact which offers itself. If ever she needed a narrow conscience and a large heart, it is now. If ever it behoved her to become all things to all men that she might by all means save some, it is now. Surely there is still, even in these days, "an unconscious Christianity." I do not mean by this merely those effects which Christianity, one might almost say, involuntarily exercises upon extra-ecclesiastical spheres of action, but more especially that secret power which it exercises upon the individual. Even those who are inimical to Christianity, are subject to its influence. Many a one, zealous against it in theory, exhibits a life and practice very inconsistent with his theory; and which

can only be explained by the secret power which Christianity exercises upon him. An absence of Church principle is not always identical with an absence of all felt need of religion. "In head a heathen, in heart a Christian," is a saying of Jakobi's, really applicable to many in these days. Not all who reject the theological setting of a doctrine necessarily reject that general exigence of faith upon which it rests. The position occupied with respect to faith is not, in all cases, identical with that occupied with respect to religion itself. Dogmatic Christianity may often be wanting where practical Christianity exists. There is an interest in religious questions even among those who have as yet no desire for religious edification. All this is partial, is but preliminary. But it is the Church's business to recognise it, to lay hold of what exists, and thus perhaps to succeed in drawing the individual into Christian fellowship. Let us but abstain from insisting upon certain stereotyped forms, as the essence of Christianity and practice, from laying down a definite scheme for the process of Christianizing a human soul, from attempting to separate, before the Lord God Himself effects this separation, between the children of God and the children of the world, between believers and unbelievers, between Christians and non-Christians—such conduct makes "the pious," (*die Frommen*) as the popular expression calls us, a party, but never overcomes prejudices. The Church of God has two duties to perform, she must

oppose unbelief, even in its slightest beginnings, according to the words of our Lord, "He that is not with Me is against Me," but not less must she cherish every spark of faith even in its weakest manifestations, according to His other saying, "He that is not against us is on our side."

But if the Church has thus to make advances towards all which, at whatever distance is tending towards her, she has no less to keep herself free in these her efforts from all that is opposed to her own nature. I mean especially that she must keep herself free from that intermingling of the ecclesiastical and political, which is one of the diseases of the age. By little and little it has come to this, that on the one hand Christ is looked upon as little else than the first of democrats, while from the other we hear the maxim : He who admits Christianity admits Feudalism. And yet neither the one nor the other is truth. The Church must indeed approach all political questions with a Christian conscience, and should even make the conscience of political parties more acute, but she must take care not to become herself a political party. She preaches, "Fear God, honour the king," but she also preaches to the king to fear God. She preaches, "Be obedient to them that have the rule over you," but she also preaches to the authorities that they hold their power only as the ministers of God. She looks at all things from the point of view afforded by the word and kingdom of God. All that abides by this standard she acknow-

ledges, wherever she may find it; all that opposes it she reproves, wherever it may exist. Nothing more injures the Church than the appearance of striving with political means and for political power. She does not desire to rule, nor is it her part to rule; but to serve, to serve for the salvation of souls. And this is specially true of the Protestant Church. She has nothing to hope for from politics, but has always been sacrificed to them. Is it asked, Why missions have for so many years had so little success in the East Indies? it must be answered: It was through the policy of Christian England. Is it asked, What threatens to annihilate the blessed results of missions among the Maoris? it must again be answered: The policy of Christian England and its unjust war. The Church must walk in the way of Divine wisdom; policy too commonly walks in the ways of worldly cunning. The two are utterly irreconcilable!

But if the Church must thus keep aloof from what is opposed to her, she must on the other hand accede to all that can reasonably be required of her. And this leads me to the demands of the age. These lie partly within the province of faith. The time when faith was a matter of authority is past. The present generation feels the impulse to give a reason for its faith; let us satisfy it. Men no longer believe, because the Church believes, but let us show the reason, the necessity of our faith, and perhaps it will be embraced in spite of its being the faith of the Church. But I mean not this alone. I

have also in view the demands which are in our days made, not of, but against the Church. The Church ought to inquire with an enlightened judgment what there is in such demands which is justifiable, and according to divine direction, and promptly to accede to it. This is not the desperate resolution of the seaman who throws the cargo overboard to save his imperilled vessel. This is not the craft of the politician, who willingly concedes at the right time what he must sooner or later be compelled to sacrifice. Nor is it that calculating prudence which, in presence of a furious onslaught, would purchase an interval of repose by a compromise. The Church knows no compromise with what is opposed to the truth of God. Error is not appeased, but rendered more fanatical by a composition. But what can be justified ought to be satisfied. Thus the Church may acknowledge that marriage has a side which may be regarded as its strictly civil side ; that when a marriage takes place this side ought to have its separate and special emphasis, and that the civil legislature should entail upon it the usual civil consequences, but never can the Church concede that marriage should be degraded into a mere contract, and cease to bear the character of a divine institution ; never will she give up her right to lay the foundations of domestic life, and to consecrate it by the Word of God and by prayer. And so with respect to education. The Church may and must acknowledge that there are branches of instruction in which she has but an indirect interest. She may and must ac-

knowledge that a distinction is to be made between different schools; some have more to do with those to whom the Church has granted the rights of Christian majority, others with those who are but preparing for this step; in the former the Church has only an interest of assistance, in the latter that of education. She may and must acknowledge that versatile pædagogic attainments are needed for the oversight of educational interests, and it is her duty to see that these are secured. But never will she cease to require that instruction of every kind should be conducted in a Christian sense and spirit. Never can she sacrifice her lawful influence over the religious and moral cultivation of the rising generation, for her own future depends upon theirs. If she were deprived of this right in the way of law, she would be forced to regain it in the way of pastoral care; but while she maintains what God has committed to her, she does not disregard the just pretensions of others.

If then it is the Church's duty to accord seasonable satisfaction to whatever is justifiable in the demands of the age, it is no less her duty to appreciate and profit by the various means which the age places at her disposal. In times like our own the regular means are not enough. Preaching does not penetrate to all. Pastoral superintendence does not reach all. There is a want of other agency for the service of the church. The church needs a more varied agency. Theoretically considered the clerical office is the central point of all ecclesiastical minis-

tration, but in reality it by no means suffices. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary means. And the age itself furnishes them. This has been called a reading age, a saying which at once points to the press. It has also been called an age of companies. This characteristic directs us to the principle of association. By means of the press the seed of God's word is scattered in separate grains, where the sowing of the church would not otherwise fall. By means of voluntary association, an agency is employed for the church which would not be otherwise placed at her disposal. The press is the tongue of the age, and its language is heard where the voice of the church would not otherwise penetrate. Association is the power of the age, and its effects are felt beyond the reach of the church's ministrations. The question is, how more widely to diffuse the word, how more largely to attract individuals. But in both these respects the main concern is less the maintenance of the ecclesiastical form than the safety of the Christian cause. As for the press, so far as it has been enlisted in the service of the church, it was, till a short time ago, devoted to subjects too exclusively ascetic. Yet even novels, if they are but animated by a spirit of Christian morality; even physical investigations, if they do but find and teach God in nature, and other works of a like character may in their measure co-operate in the building up of the kingdom of God. Nor less do we still need a journal to discuss religious and ecclesiastical questions in

an attractive and popular manner for the people. How many prejudices would be thereby overcome! Nor would the church lack the means for the attempt. In Hamburg Renan's Life of Jesus is published in combination with a novel, for the purpose of rendering both more piquant; in France a new clerical paper promises its subscribers a month's plenary indulgence. Such facts are a call to the church. Our church knows nothing of such means. Let us offer wholesome nourishment to the people, and even if it is not as yet desired, the supply will create the demand, as modern instances abundantly testify. And with respect to voluntary association, it is one of the special advantages of our times. Even Huber acknowledged that "the conviction of a general obligation to render service is at present more widely diffused and more vitally energetic than in any former period, at least since the first days of the Christian Church."* We have saving clubs, building societies, Bible societies, popular tract societies, young men's societies, female societies, societies for the sick and poor, in great numbers. These all subserve a common aim, each within its own circle, by its own means, in its own manner. By these the principle of "the division of labour" is transferred from secular to ecclesiastical ground. By these the demand for "not men, but measures," is met. It is personal intervention, personal sacrifice and service that are needed. The members of the Church must

* Compare *Sociale Frage* III., *Die innere Mission*, p. 32.

take their part in doing her service. Where official intervention might awaken suspicion, the word spoken in season by a non-clerical individual might find acceptance. Thomas Arnold and others have expressed the opinion that "both intellectual health and human dignity need that the mind should be freshened in the cottages of the poor, at the bed-sides of the sick, and in the abodes of misery; that while ministering consolation to others, it may itself be helped by a fearless plunge into the sacred waters of compassion, into that ocean of brotherly love which purifies from pride, luxury, and selfish discontent, and fortifies for self-denial." * And what is true of the man is no less so of the woman. The Christian woman belongs, first of all, to her family, but not to that alone. Who is it but the Christian woman who, to use the words of Amelia Sieveking † must bring the influence of love, kindness, and gentleness to bear upon those inimical elements which provoke such mighty collisions among mankind? "None should forget that she does not exclusively belong to the narrow domestic circle, but has also duties to fulfil towards a wider one." Elizabeth Fry, that heroine of mercy, who could present to the King of Prussia eight daughters and daughters-in-law (three were absent), seven sons, and five-and-twenty grandchildren, fulfilled all the duties of a wife and mother with a self-sacrifice and tenderness, a faithfulness and devotion rarely to be

* Compare Merz. *Armuth und Christenthum*, p. 132.
† Compare the same, p. 22.

met with; and yet what eminent success followed her efforts in the cause of charity, not only in England, but also on the continent. The truth is, that labour in the cause of Christian charity does not withdraw a woman from her more immediate sphere of duties, but renders her more capable of performing them, and increases her tenderness of conscience concerning them. What a woman does in this respect away from her home, indirectly works for the good of her home, by improving the spirit in which she rules it.

Such are a few outlines of the kind of influence which the Church needs to exert upon the people in these days. But all this applies only to her conduct with regard to her own members. She comes in contact, however, with other churches and religious communities. And then arises the question of toleration. What is now extolled as toleration is often nothing but indifferentism. That endowment of all religions with equal rights, which is demanded, can arise only from indifference towards our own. Freedom of religious worship is contended for, but the right to be without any religion is the thing signified. The abuse, however, or the exaggeration of a principle, can at no time and under no circumstances do away with its lawful use. Nor can it do so in the present instance. Even the Church is acquainted with toleration. As soon, indeed, as a church regards itself as the divinely authorised vehicle of salvation, it recognises no real church-life beyond

its own pale. But this does not apply to Protestantism, which teaches that faith, and not the belonging to any particular church, is the condition of salvation. One of my predecessors has told you that Christianity is the answer to the two questions: What is truth? and Who is my neighbour? I add, that it is the answer to the one, because it is the answer to the other. Christianity is absolute truth, so surely as Christ said: I am the truth. But it is truth only, because it is at the same time love. In the first of these aspects lies the exclusiveness of Christianity; in the second, its tolerance. And what is true of Christianity in general is true of Protestantism in particular. It does not extol as truth that which is erroneous, but it does recognise even the least spark of truth still left in the midst of error. It does not doubt the truth of God's revelation of Himself, which is one; but it does humbly submit itself to God's ways of glorifying Himself, which are many. The evangelical Christian feels bound in his own religious conscience, but he is also full of indulgence towards the conscience of his neighbour. And this is the case also with our own church. It is our church's sacred duty to defend herself, but it is not her duty to intrude in a narrow and domineering spirit upon the province of others. It is hers to testify, by means of God's Word, wherever she can gain a hearing; but it is not hers to walk in by-paths for the persuasion of proselytes. None may require of her a hospitality which would sap her own foundations—of which

examples are not wanting—but, on the other hand, she must not seek to retain by constraint such of her members as are inclined to depart from her. Within the province of the Church no other means may be employed but the power of truth itself, which in the end will surely prove victorious. Such religious communities as are without the foundation of truth are, as we may constantly see, but unceasingly advancing towards their own downfall. Such are the principles of toleration, which have been much sinned against in history, not only in the relation of church to church, but more especially in the relation of party to party. Men who make toleration their watchword are often enough, at the present day, as intolerant as possible. Be it ours to be faithful to the truth which we confess, but to be so in the love which we exhibit!

But it is not with religious communities alone that the church comes in contact, it also encounters non-ecclesiastical spheres of life, and above all the state. To understand the church's task in this respect, let us enquire what the state really is, and what it ought to be. The state is essentially of a moral nature. Moral ideas, such as that of justice, are those which it realises. But it does this only by judicial ways and means, only for the maintenance of external order, only through external laws and institutions appealing in the last instance to force. According to this its nature, it has an aspect in which it concerns all men without distinction of religion. It demands

from all the same subjection, and is also equally necessary to all. But as all that is moral is indissolubly connected with religion, so is this general moral nature of the state. It is evident that in the case of Christian nations the state differs essentially, both in the sentiment upon which it is founded, and the ideas which it realises, from the non-Christian state. Christianity insensibly influences, and has influenced, their relations, laws, institutions. A celebrated orator of the French Chamber said, as is well-known : The state must be godless. If this really means that the state could exist without the fear of God, without religion, it is nonsense. Only imagine, in the present condition of mankind, the administration of justice without the oath, and the oath without religion—everything would go to ruin. The state cannot even maintain an absolute indifference towards the various religious communities. It is right that confessional distinctions should be unable to find their expression within that province of morality on which the state has set its stamp, but to be devoid of a confession is not to be devoid of religion. From all this, it is as evident that the church has relations to the state, as that she has her own province apart from the state. They may as little be confounded with each other as they can exist in absolute independence of each other. If the former is exemplified in the bureaucratic condition of the church, the latter is shown in the absolute separation of the state from the church. If in the former the unity which does exist between them is over-stretched,

in the latter their existing differences are exaggerated. If by the former the condition of the church is secularised, by the latter the state is un-Christianised. The one is as dangerous as the other. The correct course would be such an arrangement between the two as would involve mutual friendly relations. The church cannot but strive for independence in those matters which belong to her peculiar jurisdiction. It cannot be denied that the dependence of the church upon the state, the entanglement of the church with the state, have exerted a paralysing influence upon her. A freer power of motion on the part of the church is necessary to her full development and strength. And the more definite the arrangement between the two, the more surely will their mutual friendly relations for the service of the kingdom of God be secured.

But in this service for the kingdom of God the church cannot relinquish any kind of human efforts. By her very nature she must participate in all. She must make her influence everywhere felt, but this influence must be none other than a free, an educational, and an encouraging one. Thus, with respect to science. It is not the church's part to stand, index in hand, restraining the movements of the reasoning powers, but it is hers to be incessantly reminding men of the limits of human thought. It is not hers to extinguish its degenerate offspring by secular means, but it is hers to overcome them by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

That she has truth on her side is the very reason she should rely upon its power. Nor is it otherwise with respect to art. Christianity is akin to the beautiful. He who would work out all that the Christian life involves, cannot but work out the aesthetic element which is inherent in it. The good can never be the deformed. In Christianity beauty entered into the service of truth. Therefore the church also, the vehicle of Christianity, has enlisted the service of art in all its various branches, of architecture in sacred buildings, of sound in sacred music, of poetry in sacred songs, of painting and sculpture in sacred decoration. An attitude of antagonism between them never takes place till art sinks below the Christian level, till she seeks to disseminate within the province of Christianity what she has derived from merely natural religion, till she debases herself to the vulgar, or ministers to sensual gratification. Otherwise, it is the part of Christianity and the Church to act as the guardians of the healthiness, purity, and truth of art. They have, also, ever furnished its most glorious subjects. What can be more magnificent than a Gothic cathedral—what more captivating than the Sistine Madonna of Raphael, or more engrossing than the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo; what more glorious than the Messiah of Handel or the Passion-music of Bach; what more beautiful than the Christ of Danneker, or the Twelve Apostles of Thorwaldsen. It was the Church which furnished these subjects. But, it is said, not the

Protestant Church. With respect to the prejudice that Protestantism is unfavourable to art, certain of the above names might suffice to refute it. It is nothing but a misconception of the profound ideality which manifests its creative power in Protestantism. What has not our church effected in the province of ecclesiastical poetry alone! What she does contend for is that art in its service of the beautiful, should at the same time be enlisted in the service of the true. And the means by which she would obtain this end is none other than that of a free, an educational, and an encouraging influence. Nor ought it to be any other!

Such, also, is the position occupied by our church with respect to the social questions. These she has to influence not immediately, not by external and mere mechanical means, but by the Spirit with which she inspires mankind. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, even of social wisdom. But this is just what is least considered at the present day. There was a time when church teaching looked upon men as so many walking dogmatic notions, to-day they are almost regarded as so many walking numbers. The one view is as false as the other. There can be no solution to the social questions which does not view mankind also in their religious and moral aspect.

And first, the labour question. It is true that it is not the Church which has to decide on the question : State help or self help ? But she has a factor to introduce which is too often lost sight of, and that is God's help. The Church does not lay down the

sinful maxim: Help yourself and God will help you; but says with Dr. Chalmers: "Get yourself helped by God, that you may help yourself, and through yourself, others." The Church has nothing to do with ways and means for raising the price of labour, but she teaches man to perceive its ennobling and moral power. She has not to decide upon the hours of daily labour, but she teaches that to deprive man of his Sunday is to debase him to the level of the brute. She has nothing to do with levying rates to alleviate the poverty of the working classes, but she sets her own system of poor rates, viz., that of voluntary benevolence, in motion. She says with Franklin, to every one who will listen: "He who tells the working classes that their condition can be improved in any other way than that of economy and labour, is a seducer of the people." She stands before both the employer and employed, and teaches both to exchange selfishness for self-denial, the inordinate love of pleasure for voluntary abstinence, discontent for contentment, and immorality for purity. Is it really believed that social improvement can take place without moral renovation? Apart from genuine Christianity every effort will be insufficient to prevent the working classes from sinking again into a state of modern slavery. I do not affirm with Bishop von Ketteler that the Church alone has the power of solving the labour question, but I do maintain that without the Church there is nothing which can bring it to a prosperous issue.

Nor is it otherwise with the increasing pauperism

of the age. Christ said, "The poor ye have always with you," but the question of the progressive pauperisation of whole classes of the population becomes a vital subject of inquiry for all Christendom. And here also we are compelled to admit that mere poor rates, were they ever so large, mere alms, were they ever so abundant, do not avail. Constraint cannot effect what free love can. Poverty is like a gulf which never fills, how much soever may be thrown into it, when the intention is merely to fill it and nothing further. Alms must not be given merely to save life, but also to educate for life. We say with Elizabeth Fry, that the care of souls is the soul of care for the poor. And for this very reason, in this field also no efforts can reckon upon success, unless they are made in a Christian sense and in a Christian spirit. The matter is not that the Church should have the care of the poor in her own hands, but that the moral and Christian side of this care should not be lost sight of.

In short, if we would alleviate external distress, we must above all things relieve the internal necessity. Moral ruin is as much the premiss as the result of external decay. It is just the appreciation of the mutual influence of these two sides, the aiming at the removal of both the inward and the outward poverty, which are so emphatically insisted on in the so-called inner mission. Such an institution is indeed both the offspring and the need of our times. And what has it not already effected?

Its field of operation is truly an extensive one. Here we behold asylums in which children are sheltered from destitution, there houses of refuge in which men are helped out of moral ruin, here are homes in which travellers are preserved from temptation, there institutions which offer a dwelling to female servants, here the navvies on our railroads are sought out that they may not be left destitute of the Word of God, there the emigrants are visited that they may take the gospel away with them, here every energy is devoted to the oversight of prisoners, there to the care of the sick and wounded, and to many like purposes. And the soul of all is that compassionate love which seeks the lost. This and nothing else rules in every institution really belonging to the inner mission, all objections to which come to nought in presence of its blessed results. And these all accrue to the profit of the Church!

The task to which the Church is directed by all this is indeed one of vast extent. Yet this relates merely to the Christian world. And she also occupies a position with respect to the non-Christian world. The enormous extent of this field has already been touched upon in these lectures. What are we to say to it? The Church must grow; if she ceases to grow, she is beginning to die. As surely as Christianity is the religion for all men, so surely has she a mission to all men. She cannot rest until whatever lives upon God's earth becomes the likeness of the beauty of the Lord.

And yet this agency of the Church, which was the first in her history, and will be her last, excites mistrust! It may be that many weaknesses cleave to our missionary exertions, but in what human work is not this the case? It may be that results are slow, but are they more rapid even in Christendom? It may be that lamentable divisions manifest themselves even in this field, but are divisions to be healed by rejecting a duty? It may be that there is a failure of apostolic men abroad, but is there not also such a failure at home? It is true, too, that the Church has an infinite amount of work to do at home, but while the one has to be done the other must not be left undone. In her times of renovation an impulse for extension will always be excited. And all that is effected among those who are not Christians, reacts, with an exciting, reviving, and animating effect within the Christian circle. Never must the Church allow her calling with regard to the non-Christian world to be frustrated. Civilization does not precede Christianity, but follows it. Let this fact not be lost sight of in our days!

They are, my respected hearers, but scanty outlines which I am able to present to you, but slight hints which I am able to give. The tasks of the church in general, and in our days especially, are so extensive, that they cannot find sufficient space within so narrow a frame. We will, however, glance at the urgent want of our age. And what is this? What but a consuming zeal for the house of the

Lord, a love which never tires, nor loses its faith in mankind, a steadfastness which never turns aside from truth either to the right hand or to the left, a forbearance which will not trample upon the slightest blade of God's harvest, an activity ready to sacrifice all, and a patience which can wait for the Lord! The Church has to place her hope upon the Lord, to concentrate and dedicate all her powers to His service. To pray and work—such is the vocation of the church in our days as well as in all others!

You all know Schiller's lay of the Bell, and the Latin motto prefixed to it, *Vivos voco—Mortuos plango—Fulgura frango.* (I call the living, I lament the dead, I break the lightning.) It is an old inscription on church bells, and may be applied in a spiritual sense to the tasks of the church. She calls and assembles her living members to common labours. She laments her dead members, and she does more, she prays for them. Will she, however, be able to break the lightning which threatens her, to scatter the clouds which are gathering against her? Such is the question of the future, which my next lecture shall attempt to answer.

LECTURE III.

THE PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH.

It is to the present prospects of the Church that I am to-day, in this concluding lecture, to direct your attention. We have now to infer what will be the result of that development which we have been tracing, to observe the finger-posts of the present, to cast a glance into the future. And first, I would avoid all possible misconception. I make no pretensions to fill the office of a prophet. It is given to no created spirit to raise the veil from the future. But as surely as the Lord has commanded us to observe the signs of the times, so surely does this involve the injunction to enquire whither the signs of the times are pointing us? And they point not merely to what the Church has to do, but also to what she has to expect, whether her expectation is to be one of hope or of fear. The Church must have her glance steadfastly fixed upon the future. She is founded for the future. And this is a quality which she shares in common with that Christianity whose vehicle she is. While other religions only look back-

wards to a lost Paradise, a vanished golden age, without having any future before them, Christianity, and consequently the Church, has her era of glory also before her. Hence, from her very cradle, the eye of the church has been directed to her future consummation. In her very earliest times it was, that men were most occupied with the end of the times. The last book of the canonical Scriptures is a prophetic one. And in the case of the Church, what she is, and what she will be, are constantly and indissolubly intertwined. She only is because she will be. We have already seen how it is with her now, and what she ought to do; let us now enquire what is about to be?

To give a correct answer to this question, it will be necessary first to consider those fundamental laws by which the historical development of the church is governed. And here two points demand our attention: the church as she is in herself, and her relation to the world. In the first respect, her history is a progressive working out of her own life; in the second, it is a continuous alternate influence of the church and the world upon each other. We will begin with the former.

The church lives, and more than this, she has the promise of everlasting life, and consequently an indestructible vitality. The deepest vital energies known upon earth stir within her bosom. And her life is never at a stand-still. As long as a man lives he strives. And so does the church. Every acquisition

which she makes is but a starting point for fresh efforts. In her case, even apparent retrogression is but a preparation for fresh progress. Men grow old, nations too grow old; the church never grows old. In her, as in Christianity itself, is hidden the secret of perpetual youth. She bears upon her the image of Christ himself; she is also the mirror of His life. She is passing through a continuous passion, and she often suffers most deeply when this is least apparent, and when she seems externally to be enjoying the greatest peace. She is also passing through a continuous resurrection, and often rises again in greatest power when she seems to have been the most entirely subdued. It is her triumph that she is continually renewing herself. It is in times when she has been most threatened that she has most nobly defended herself. Times when all has seemed lost have ever been those which have contributed to collect and intensify her powers. And if she were reduced to fragments, a new life would revive from her ruins. Much, indeed, that belongs to her is perishable, and must perish, but far more must endure. The form of external churchmanship may change, the nature of internal church fellowship must remain. The manner in which she is connected with any definite period may pass away, her vocation to transfigure all that is earthly and temporal cannot pass away. The earthen vessel in which she bears the divine treasure may be shivered, the heavenly treasure itself, the

pure gospel, is of everlasting duration. We may apply to her the words of the poet and say,

> "Und ob alles im ewigen Wechsel kreist,
> Es harret im Wechsel ein ruhiger Geist!" *

And yet this spirit never rests, is never inactive. There are times in the history of the church when it may be seen, as it were, to be growing in its own provinces, there are others when externally at least nothing of this is apparent. There are times when the vitality inherent in the church evidences itself by a mighty extension, there are others when it is occupied in tranquil self-communings. There are times when everything seems to be approaching its dissolution; there are others when a powerful impulse to collect and to build up is at work. But amidst all, the church advances; she grows, and must grow. And this she cannot do without reciprocal influence taking place between herself and the world.

This again has two sides. The one is the appropriation of all that can be made serviceable to the kingdom of God; the other, the rejection of all that is antagonistic thereto. In the former respect the Church's path is through the heart to the life. It is into the very inmost depths of the human heart, that secret laboratory of all conviction, that she enters and begins her work. Upon the very hearth of

* And if all revolves in perpetual change, a quiet spirit tarries in the change.

human personality, where the sacred fire is burning, it is, that she kindles her purifying flames. And it is thus that she ever obtains possession of the whole man. There can be no moral renovation without a religious awakening. Intellectual perversions are not to be conquered without moral elevation. The comprehension and appreciation of divine truth cannot be called forth until a preliminary awakening of the sense for truth has taken place. And as the Church deals with the individual, so must she also deal with whole epochs. She lays hold of each epoch by its very heart, that she may renew it. She has to sanctify the inmost springs of a generation's life, to permeate with a divine influence the entire system of thought and action of each historic period. But this she cannot do without uninterruptedly excluding from it whatever is antagonistic to the will and kingdom of God. There can be no success without incessant conflict. Goethe says: "That one peculiar and deepest theme of the history of the world, and of mankind, to which all others are subordinate, is the conflict between faith and unbelief." He was in the right, and this conflict moreover increases instead of decreases with the course of time. The deeper the impression made by the kingdom of God, the more sharply will its reverse also be apparent. The Lord himself laid down two signs of His coming:—the one the propagation of the gospel throughout the whole world; the other a declension in Christendom itself. Certainly it is the fighting

church which is also the victorious church. And it is victorious not merely at the end of the times, but also during their development. Her last conflict, however, will, as the decisive one, be also the most arduous. Yet even before that decisive struggle takes place, it is certain that there is no history of the church in the world without a continuous warfare of the church with the world.

In the course of this whole great process of development, rapid progress is sometimes made as in a moment, though even then only after hidden preparation; generally, however, it goes on but very gradually. The seed of God in the field of humanity is incomparably slower in attaining maturity than the seed in the province of nature. The development of the kingdom of God is not computed by years, nor even by decades, but by centuries. Its great crises often do not come to an issue till whole generations have died out and whole eras have passed by. Hence a heavy burden of abnegation is mostly laid upon those who fight for the great ends of the kingdom of God in such periods of transition. They die, having longed to see the day which should show them the fruit of their labour, and having longed in vain.

We are living in such a period of transition, in a "time of twilight," as it has been called, and many sincere workers in the kingdom of God are experiencing something of this longing in vain. This is perhaps not the lightest grief of many in our days. It is a feeling as truly as strikingly expressed by Lenau,

though with reference to a different subject, when he asks—

> "Woher der düstre Unmuth unserer Zeit
> Der Groll, die Eile, die Zerrissenheit?

and replies to this question in the words—

> Das Sterben in der Dämmerung ist Schuld
> An dieser freudearmen Ungeduld.
> Herb'ist's das lang erschute Licht nicht schauen,
> Zu Grabe geh'n in seinem Morgengrauen!" *

And perhaps our age does not exhibit even the characteristics of the dawn. Who can say whether the twilight in which we are living is the morning or whether it may not perhaps be the evening twilight? There is as much to be said on the one side as on the other. And it is possible that it may terminate in a night in which the only light may be that of single stars. Antagonism to the kingdom of God has not yet reached its climax; it will yet develop itself in a sharper and rougher manner. Nothing ever dies which has not lived itself out, and it cannot be said of enmity to the Lord, that it has yet reached this stage. We must be prepared for this; and yet we must not lose hope in consequence.

In considering the question what may be before the Church, we are in danger in the present day of falling either into a one-sided Pessimism, which paints all in the darkest hues, or into an equally one-sided

* Whence the sad discouragement of our days, the rancour, the haste, the division? Death in the twilight is the cause of this joyless impatience; it is grievous not to behold the long-wished for light; to go to the grave during its dawn.

Optimism, which beholds the future bright with the most dazzling colours. The former paralyses activity, even Christian activity; the latter seduces activity into erroneous paths. The one is as unjustifiable as the other. The matter appears quite otherwise to the thoughtful mind, the spiritually modest sense, which cherishes a joyful confidence in the divine vitality of the Church and its future prospects, yet prepares itself also for persevering patience with respect to the development of the Church and its results. In holy Scripture there are two verses which stand in direct juxtaposition.* The first says: "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." The other: "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may inherit the promises." These together express just what we are in need of in the present day, and contain the secret of all genuine Christian activity.

Therefore, let us not cast away our confidence. Matters have not gone so far in the case of the Church that she must adopt Hamlet's monologue, and exclaim: "To be, or not to be—that is the question." There are indeed prophetic voices which predict her speedy end; and there is also a movement which is labouring for her destruction. When the relations between church and state were discussed in the Frankfort parliament, Vogt spoke in favour of their separation, but "only under the condition that what is called the Church should altogether vanish

* Heb. x. 35, 36.

from earth, and retreat to its native place in heaven." Such expressions furnish us specimens by which we may recognise those movements which are aiming at the abolition of the Church. But we may listen to them very tranquilly. As long as the Church keeps firm to the foundation upon which her Lord has founded her, that saying is true concerning her, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (Matt. xvi. 18.) To be or not to be is not the question for the Church.

This applies also to all that is said of a "new Church," of a "Church of the future." What is meant by this is not a change in the external form of the Church, but an abolition of her essential nature. There is to be no longer an all-embracing Christianity, but only a religion of universal philanthropy; no longer a Church creed but only the solution: We all believe in one God, of whom each forms a different notion; no longer faith in the Only-Begotten of the Father, according to the saying, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," but the degradation of Christ, at best, to a mere religious genius; no longer a resurrection of Jesus Christ, but the fact that He lives in the memory of His followers; no redemption by the Cross, but at best only a self-redemption by man's own act. Richard von der Alm would indeed retain the cross as a "religious mark" in his "new Church," yet not as an emblem of redemption but as an "ancient symbol," pointing towards the four quarters of the heavens and expressing the universe, infinity with regard to space.* The

* *Theologische Briefe*, iii., p. 778.

cross is to be adorned with wreaths of ivy instead of bearing the image of the Crucified. Four annual festivals are to take the place of the Christian festivals, viz., the festival of divinity on the first of January, that of human dignity and the love of one's neighbour on the two first days of April, that of the blessings of nature on the two first days of July, and that of immortality on the two first days of October.* And such things are said by a man who in his "confession of faith of the new deistical Church" lays down as its third article "I believe in the power of prayer!"† It is evident that the complete abolition of positive Christianity, and consequently of the very foundations of the Church, is aimed at. The "New Church" means the same as no Church. Nevertheless, the Church may be of good courage with respect to such talk as this. Such blows can neither shake her edifice nor break her columns. In spite of them, To be, or not to be—is not the question for the Church.

This is true, too, of the Protestant Church especially. Her speedy end is indeed predicted not only by the opponents of Christianity, but also by the Romish Church. Our attention is directed to the internal rent in our Church, which does indeed present a lamentable spectacle to the world. We are reminded of the melancholy fact, that so many of her professors have departed from her fundamental doc-

* Comp. *Theologische Briefe*, iii., p. 781, &c.
† *Ibid.*, p. 771.

trines. We are told that a separation into sects is imminent in our Church, and much more of the same nature. And in presence of such events, "all good and honest Protestants who still desire to retain their Christianity," are exhorted, "in the universal shipwreck, to seize the last plank, and to save themselves in the ark of Noah," *i.e.*, in the bosom of the only saving Church. Such, at least, is the advice of the Bishop of Paderborn,* who considers himself, "in behalf of God and of justice, the lawful chief pastor" even of the Protestants of his diocese.† But this delusion is no less a one than that already named. Our Church's existence does not depend upon the grace of the Church of Rome, but upon the free grace of God, upon which she is founded. She stands or falls with the Word of God, and therefore will never fall. She is founded upon the doctrine of justification through faith, the truth of which can never be destroyed. Roman Catholicism, on the contrary, not only has a common share in our perils and conflicts, but has also many besides which are peculiar to herself. And not the least among these is the noisy dispute which has arisen within her, between obstinate persistence in theoretical views on the one hand, and forced connivance in actual practice on the other. Can it, moreover, be really thought that a Church whose supreme Head, in his very last encyclical letter, condemns Bible societies under one and the same head as communisn, can have any attraction for

* Ein bischöfliches Wort, p. 22. † Ibid., p. 17.

Protestants? No; Protestant principles have the future on their side. It is just because Protestantism insists upon inward experience that it satisfies those profounder spirits who are acquainted with it. It is just because it does not exclude, but includes, investigation, that it attracts those thinking minds who cleave to it. It is just because it does not merely reject the errors of the times, but also acknowledges their truths, that it exercises a power over all times. And we may joyfully and confidently affirm that to be or not to be is also not the question for our own Church.

Therefore, let us not cast away our confidence! But, at the same time, we have need of patience! We must not turn our eyes from the clouds which are lowering on our Church's horizon. It is not indeed my intention to detain you with the various pictures which have been drawn of coming events, whether of a gloomy or cheering nature. According to some it is our Church's vocation to merge itself in the State, according to others it will be separated into merely individual religious communities. Some dream of the noble picture of a German National Church, others propose a General United Church, which shall admit of "the silent prayer of the Quakers, the field-preaching of the Methodists, the hymns of the Moravians, in a purified form." Thus do different minds imagine different pictures of the future. Be it ours to consider that future only which is near at hand.

If we cast a glance upon the dangers now threat-

ening our Church, we shall perceive that they are threefold, viz., violence towards the Church, separation in the Church, and a state of suffering for the Church.

And, first, violence towards the church! The State church will fall; the "people's church" will be formed. But how, when the people is not a Christian one? The church will then be subject to powers which are alien to her. We have already seen how misdirected public opinion can exercise an unjustifiable influence in the decision of ecclesiastical questions; how demonstrations by masses are got up both for and against the church; how political sympathies and antipathies exert their influence when church interests are dealt with; how many will take their part in discussing church matters whose lives are not in accordance with church rules; how a portion of the ruling powers in the great realm of the Protestant Church are wavering, full of insecurity and anxiety, and drawing back just when they should persevere. If such things are still further developed we are in danger of falling under that rule of numbers which is so opposed to the very essence of the church. Agitation will be transferred to the province of the church; party spirit outside the church will penetrate into the life of the church, and she herself will become the prey of the shifting currents of the day. And yet the life of the church is of so exquisitely delicate a nature that anything would better bear rough handling. Holy Scripture, indeed, speaks of the kingdom of

heaven "suffering violence" (Matt. xi. 12), but it is the violence of those who take possession of it, not of those who force it, that is meant. Not that the church can be destroyed thereby. Even though faith should have to retreat into the narrowest circles, it would thence recommence its victorious march through the world. But the violence inflicted upon the church would yet be a deep woe with which she would be visited!

The second danger which threatens her is a separation among her members. Unless all tokens are fallacious, we are preparing for a separation. I do not affirm that this must ensue, but that it may most easily do so. The much admired neutrality between Christianity and anti-Christianity, the indifferent way of taking things easily, the remaining in a state of non-decision between the two conflicting views of the world can least of all continue. Every man will be obliged to show what he believes and which side he takes. The saying of Christ, Matt. x. 34: "I came not to send peace, but a sword," will, if ever, be verified in the times which are near at hand. It seems as if things would again come to the state in which they were when Christianity accepted the contest against the heathen powers of the world. When religious convictions separate men, it is because they possess the whole man, that they will manifest their separating force in every department of life. Then will men cease to cry, "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace. Every individual Christian will be obliged to

be a character, and to act as such. If, as has been said, the Johannean age of the church is indeed beginning, it will not be only, as is supposed, an age of love; it is one of the essential features of St John to separate most decidedly between God and the world, between faith and unbelief, and this separation also will then be manifested. If so, the church will not perish. But the separation which would affect her members would yet be a woe which she would herself experience.

The third danger which threatens our church is a state of suffering for herself. Our church, in spite of many existing differences, is linked in many respects with the prae-Constantine age. True believers compared with the anti-Christian world are again a little flock, as they were then; public opinion is again, on the whole, unfavourable to Christianity as it was then; the church is again referred to her own peculiar powers as she was then; it is again her vocation to establish her doctrines with respect to differences within her own bosom as it was then; apologetic composition, the defence of the Christian faith and life against opponents, has again attained the importance which it then had; the work of extending the church seems again about to become as powerful a factor as it then was; nay, even the struggle about the church's constitution has become as urgent a task as it then was. But, at the same time, and this is the decisive point, she is not advancing towards an external glory, but it is the lowliness of the Lord's handmaid

which she expects. She will not be the promoted, the externally respected, but the oppressed and the suffering church.

It is for this very reason that she has so true a type in the age we have referred to. It was by toleration that the ancient church conquered, by suffering that she achieved her greatest victories. Nor will it be otherwise in the future. Napoleon I. is reported to have said: "A Sovereign may indeed fear, but he must never say so." If this be true, the church would be the better for carrying the maxim into practice. Nor need she even entertain a fear. She will be victorious at last, as is even already evident.

There is an absence of vitality in all the negations and aberrations of our times. Every error is only so far powerful as it contains within it some force of truth. But such truth as there may be in the antagonistic schemes of the day has been long before furnished by Christianity, in incomparably greater abundance and splendour. It may be said that what is true in them is not new, and what is new is not true. It is not the first time that the attempt has been made to hurl the Lord Christ from the throne of His dominion, but in the end He has always made His enemies His footstool. He ever constrains that which opposes Him to subserve His designs. Even opposition to truth has its vocation, though an involuntary one. It is obliged to serve as an incentive to the more profound comprehension of truth, and to its wider dissemination. When it has fulfilled this its task, it sinks

again into its own nothingness, and leaves its defeat to history. Man can harden himself in opposition, but he cannot live upon opposition. The deepest cravings of the human soul must be filled. A whole nation, even our own, may for a time seek to satisfy these cravings in false ways, but the time will come when intoxication will no longer be able to allay hunger. That which can refresh in life, comfort in sorrow, pacify in death, and furnish even in this world a foretaste of eternal life, will at length gain the victory. And it will soon be manifest that it is only Christianity—I mean Christianity according to the Word of God—which can afford full satisfaction to the inward longing of the human soul for the eternal and the permanent. The pictures which are drawn of the future are all like the *Fata morgana*, which show to the traveller in the desert smiling pastures, green oases, populous towns, flowing streams, at an attainable distance, and when he thinks he has reached them they are found to be but a deceitful image. Delusive waters furnish no refreshment to the thirsty soul, imaginary bread does not satisfy. That which alone can satisfy the spirit is that which is born of the Spirit. Only what is true will endure. Even in the present phase of human development this is as much a fact as ever. Nor only so. In proportion as the sufferings of the church increase will her bright side be shown. Already the first tokens of this, though indeed only the first, are seen. Indifference towards questions of faith has again disap-

peared, interest in them is reawakening. The prattle with which Göthe makes the deluded Gretchen answer Faust's pantheistic expressions :—

> " Das ist alles recht schön und gut
> Ungefähr sagt dies der Pfarrer auch
> Nur mit ein bischen anderen Worten," *

is beginning to cease. Men are beginning to be thoughtful about faith, to be better acquainted with its reasons. Greater information is appearing. The death which lay upon the regions of the church is giving way to the reviving breath of spring. It is not indeed yet conquered, but its icy covering has already burst. Wherever the gospel is preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, multitudes of hearts close with it. Much more is expected of preachers. A mere moralising no longer satisfies. What is required is, that they should speak out of the fulness and completeness of the gospel, and moreover in the language of the heart, as there directly echoed and experienced. The joy of bearing testimony is awakening, the courage to confess Christ is reviving. The pastoral office is again held, in many respects, in higher estimation. It is true that this respect for the office is in our days in proportion to the personal qualities of those who fill it. But even the fact that personal qualities are esteemed so important bears witness to a spiritual awakening. Different parties in the church are again learning to understand that it is a fundamentally

* That is all very beautiful and good, the parson says almost the the same, only in rather different words.

common interest which they have to advocate. A new ecclesiastical sense of honour has been called forth ; clerical work is taking a more soaring flight. The one-sided separation of theological science from church life is abolished, and they are beginning mutually to complete one another. Materialism is already conquered in the department of science, and its subjection in that of practice will not long tarry. Even the several national churches are coming forth from their exclusiveness, and showing more liberality towards each other. Assistance is being rendered to the scattered members of the Church. Interest is taken in and increasing care bestowed upon the mass of those dispersed in foreign lands, who pass their lives without church-fellowship or pastoral care. The Protestants in Paris, Lyons, and elsewhere, are turned to with active sympathy. A way is being made for intercourse between our church and the Protestant church of North America. The home and foreign Bible societies are developing a hitherto unanticipated activity. The Bible is translated into almost all living languages. The gospel is showing itself to be, as it truly is, capable of clothing its rich contents even in the poorest form of speech, raising this to its own level, and losing nothing by the transaction. The first literature which distant lands require falls to their lot in the reception of Holy Scripture. In short, the seeking of the lost has obtained such an extension as it never had before. To all this must be added a number of existent circumstances which,

though they do not lie within the province of the church, help to facilitate her work and furnish her with assistance. Art is again directed towards the church. This as yet is least shown in poetry, for we buried our last hymn writers of importance in Spitta and Knapp. If, however, a Christian spirit is but generally awakened, this will be certainly and speedily shown in the province of poetry. Church architecture is already endeavouring to realise definite evangelical notions. Among the many memorials everywhere erected we find also those of the Reformers. Church music, though it has not equalled that of the era of Bach, has yet some splendid productions to point to, especially among ourselves. The revived love of vocal music has essentially contributed to bring to light our ancient and glorious treasures of church songs. Nor is this all. The universality of intercourse, the mingling of various races, is contributing to bring the members of different churches nearer to each other. In countries where hitherto the strangest notions have been entertained of what Protestantism might be, a change is being gradually brought about. The public opinion of Protestant countries has extended its influence even to Spain, and pardon at least has been extended where the existing laws were against them, to those Protestants who were suffering for their faith. The Protestant church is evidently beginning to be, even in these things, what she is in other respects—a power. Nor is this all. The historical premisses are more favour-

able than ever to missions, and especially to Protestant missions. The supremacy of the seas in the hands of England and North America, that is of two supremely Protestant countries, the facility and rapidity of communication, the labours in the province of comparative philology, these and other like circumstances are directly and surprisingly serviceable to the cause of missions, and promise, at least so far as they are concerned, more favourable results. It is indeed a mighty process of assimilation which Christianity, and especially Protestant Christianity, has to effect. But Christianity is not merely a repulsive, but an attractive power. It has but to be brought near to souls to develope in the noblest manner its powers of attraction. Let us not then cast away our confidence!

Modern culture is indeed still in a position antagonistic to Christianity. But it is a false view of the matter to suppose that Christianity must be crushed unless it can be reconciled with modern progress. The truth is, that if modern culture is to endure it must suffer itself to be filled with the Christian spirit, and must separate itself from all that is anti-Christian. Nothing is more certain than that the culture of the present age, unless it suffers itself to be penetrated by a Christian leaven, receives an ephemeral character. Inventions alone, were they ever so abundant, would not avail; for no eternal redemption can be invented, and in this alone lies the deliverance of our age. The impulse given to

material interests will not avail, for there can be no peace if an interest in the soul's salvation be not generally revived; and that alone can give rest to our age. Education alone cannot suffice, for it remains but partial so long as the spiritual education of the heart forms no part of it; and in this alone is the remedy for the ills of the age. As surely as all that is true and healthy in modern culture rests ultimately upon Christianity, so surely must it return to its starting-point, or it will perish. The future of the Church, however, does not depend upon the future of modern culture.

The Church, indeed, is still standing before the problem of the social question and social distress. Yet it occupies a totally different position with respect to it from that of the state. It is indeed the same poverty which threatens both, the same currents which are undermining the arrangements of both, the same questions upon which the prosperity of both, in part, at least, depends. The success, too, which the state may attain with respect to the social question would directly profit the Church, and *vice versa*, if the Church should preserve the moral and Christian spirit, the foundations of the state would be thereby strengthened. All this is true. But nevertheless the difference which exists is still more important. Will it ever be possible for states to hinder the financial and moral ruin of whole classes, or at least to prevent the increase of the misery at present existing in them? Many answer this question in the negative. But

granting that they are unable to do this, the Church would not be drawn into the general ruin. Just where states die, the Church revives to fresh labour. Where states give up in despair, the Church begins again in hope. Where political means are unable to avert ruin, the Church steps in with her spiritual means. Where laws do not reach, Christian compassion hastens with her loving help. Where the wisdom of the statesman has exhausted its last resource, the wisdom of free and sacred love ever finds new methods. The threatening spectre of the future, which terrifies the leader of the state, does but kindle in the Church a new, abundant, and rich delight in labour. Even under the darkest circumstances will she fulfil her vocation. And this is none other than to be the comforter of the poor, the guardian of the perishing, the deliverer of the oppressed. Nor is there a more noble vocation! The Church's future stands out in brilliant relief, even from the dark background of the misery of the future.

The Church is indeed still standing before the whirl of political occurrences, and she is actually affected thereby. But the future condition of the nations does not absolutely determine the future condition of the Church. The nations are indeed united to the Church, but the Church is not united to any individual nation. It passes on from nation to nation, dispensing blessings, healing wounds, bringing peace through the whole world. Nations may perish through their own corruption; the Church does not, therefore,

perish with them, but builds herself a new home upon the ruins of the old world. It was in a decaying world that Christianity first appeared. When the annihilating blows of the German nations laid the Roman empire in ruins, it might have been thought that the young Church would have been overthrown with it. Instead of which, she created out of the German tribes a ruling power for all modern times. It is indeed true that whole realms have been torn from the Church; where the eloquent preaching of an Augustine was once heard Mahomedanism now prevails, and the Church of St Sophia has become a mosque. But the Church has obtained new national fields of labour; what she has lost to Islam has been abundantly compensated in the primitive forests of North America; and as for Islam itself, where would it be found in Europe if the jealousy of Christian powers no longer upheld it? Even the fanaticism, which is reappearing therein, is no sign of original strength, but rather a foretokening of approaching ruin. In short, the Church does indeed appropriate all available national gifts and powers, but she does not depend upon them. Should the political circumstances of the nations assume ever so lowering a form; nay, should our own nation—which God forbid!—fail to attain its true position, and ignore its historical vocation, all this could not occur without entailing heavy trials upon the Church; but she is herself independent of the rise and fall of national

life. The kingdom of God is higher than the kingdoms of the nations, and this must remain to us!

To speak generally, the church does not exist by reason of the privileges which worldly powers concede to her, nor will she die through the injustice which worldly powers are preparing to do her. This is a fact which cannot be too frequently impressed, whether upon her friends or foes, and one which we shall do well to keep before us, especially with regard to those efforts of the day which are threatening the present condition of the church. The unchristianizing of the state is unceasingly advancing, but, as though God had taken care to provide a wholesome compensation, in proportion as the unchristianizing of the state increases, the secularizing of the church decreases. The separation of church and state is insisted on. Suppose it should take place. It is the church that would suffer the least. She would be thereby more than formerly thrown upon her own resources; but she has never been a loser by being forced to call up all her inner strength. She would be, perhaps, nay probably, forsaken by a multitude of such as are only in external connexion with her, but she would not lose thereby; if the dead members fall away, the living ones remain. What the church might lose in the number of her members she would gain in the fidelity of her confessors. The Protestant Church has ever been estimated rather by the quality than the quantity of those who belong to her. Besides, with the independence which she

would acquire, she would find herself also relieved from many a fetter which now confines her. Suppose it did come to the introduction of civil marriage —although in many places, as *e. g.* among ourselves, no need of this has as yet been by any means shown, the necessary consequence would be that the church would carry out in greater purity than she is now able to do, those rules concerning marriage which are found in the word of God. It is a disadvantage under which the church has to suffer, so long as her present union with the state endures, that she is unable to practise within her own circle those peculiar principles which she derives from God's word concerning the conclusion of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage ; the moment of separation would find her no longer hindered or restrained in this respect. Suppose it should come to pass that she should be deprived of her rights with respect to schools. If these rights are not acknowledged as being historically delivered to her, they cannot but be recognised as being rooted in the very nature of the thing. The school cannot dispense with religion ; even in North America those very schools where religious neutrality is professed, are opened with the Lord's prayer and the reading of a chapter of the Bible. And even if it should happen that religious instruction were banished from the school, the church would be obliged to take it up ; perhaps it might be even better for her if she took upon herself, earlier and more entirely than is at present the case, the religious education of the rising gener-

ation. Moreover, experience already shows that where the separation of church and state has been effected, the ministers of the church have been of necessity fallen back upon, in the re-establishment of a systematic oversight of schools, not because they were clergymen, but in spite of their being such. In short, if the form under which church supervision of schools has hitherto been carried on be destroyed, it will still be impossible to destroy the influence of the Church upon them. And this is the case in all other relations also. Not till the church has renounced all political means will the need of Church discipline be felt, and the power of exercising it acquired. Much of what is now of necessity left to the agency of voluntary associations, such as, *e. g.*, missions, will then become the direct work of the Church. And whereas state churchmanship and national churchmanship are now in many respects obstructive to a union of Protestant churches, these restraints would then be removed. In short, the liberty of the Church would be a new source of strength to her. And those who, under the pretext of desiring to re-transplant the Church into that inner life which is her befitting sphere, are striving either to govern her by the masses or totally to annihilate her, will find that they have deceived themselves. That which has already so frequently been confirmed in the history of salvation will again be found true; the evil which men think to do to the Church shall be overruled for her good by the Lord. All who are in any

way acquainted with the nature of her life must agree, that all increases of the church's independence instead of weakening, must in the end invigorate her. Undoubtedly this can only ensue through the most arduous conflicts and serious trials; and though the church need not seek the cross infallibly connected therewith, yet, on the other hand, she must not flee from it. Least of all need she fear it. Perhaps she has hitherto been in too easy circumstances, and has suffered herself to be cherished and tended. It is under the cross that the church will flourish and the Christian character be matured.

Is, then, the Church to be or not to be? Is there to be a church of the future, or a future of the Church? I once more put these questions. Surely the answer cannot be a doubtful one. I repeat that the Church of Jesus Christ alone has the promise of everlasting life, and therefore of indestructible vital power. They are great battles which are before her, great tasks which are laid upon her, but greater still is her strength. She is passing through a gloomy present, and it is no bright future which lies before her; but she can see the sun of grace shining behind the clouds. It is an arduous stage of her development which she is now accomplishing, but she is thereby advancing to the ever nearing goal of a glorious consummation. It is true, indeed, that all great epochs in human history, no less than in the history of Christianity, have been connected with great personalities, in

whom both the wants and the remedies of the age have found, as it were, their incorporate expression; and it is complained that such personalities are lacking in the church of our days. It may be so! Yet I remember how our nation rose to the occasion in the second decade of the present century. It was under the oppression of foreign rule that the heroes of our nation were matured, and during the war of independence that they were proved. So also will heroes of faith be reared for the Church, under the sufferings of the cross.

Meanwhile, though we have not at all times great personalities, we have always Christian ones. And such may the ministers and all the members of the church allow themselves to be called. The ministers of the church—for it is upon their shoulders, as we would remember, that an immense responsibility now lies. The members of the church—for the existing generation in the church is responsible for the church's existing condition. Let us with open eyes recognize the time of the church's visitation, for even though she may be undergoing a judgment, it is still a gracious visitation. Let us follow with willing hearts the thoughts of God. His purposes towards our age, even though they lead through trials, are still thoughts of peace. Let us with new and faithful energy set our hands to the work of God which is committed to us; He will at length bring it gloriously to pass! It is not as if the church had to depend upon the will or the power of

man. She has help of a higher kind. She may inscribe upon the portals of the future those closing words of St. Matthew's gospel: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The church of God is advancing towards the end of the world. And what is to happen? We reply, that Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder will yet be realized in her. It was realized in the preliminary history of Israel—this issued in the Lord from heaven. It was realized in the actual history of the Lord Jesus himself—this issued in the government in heaven. It will also be realized in the history of the church—this will end with the church in heaven. But both the militant and the triumphant church,—past, present, and future,—all must unite in one confession, which—God grant it!—is our own:

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